MUSIC AND ITS MASTERS

ANTON RUBINSTEIN

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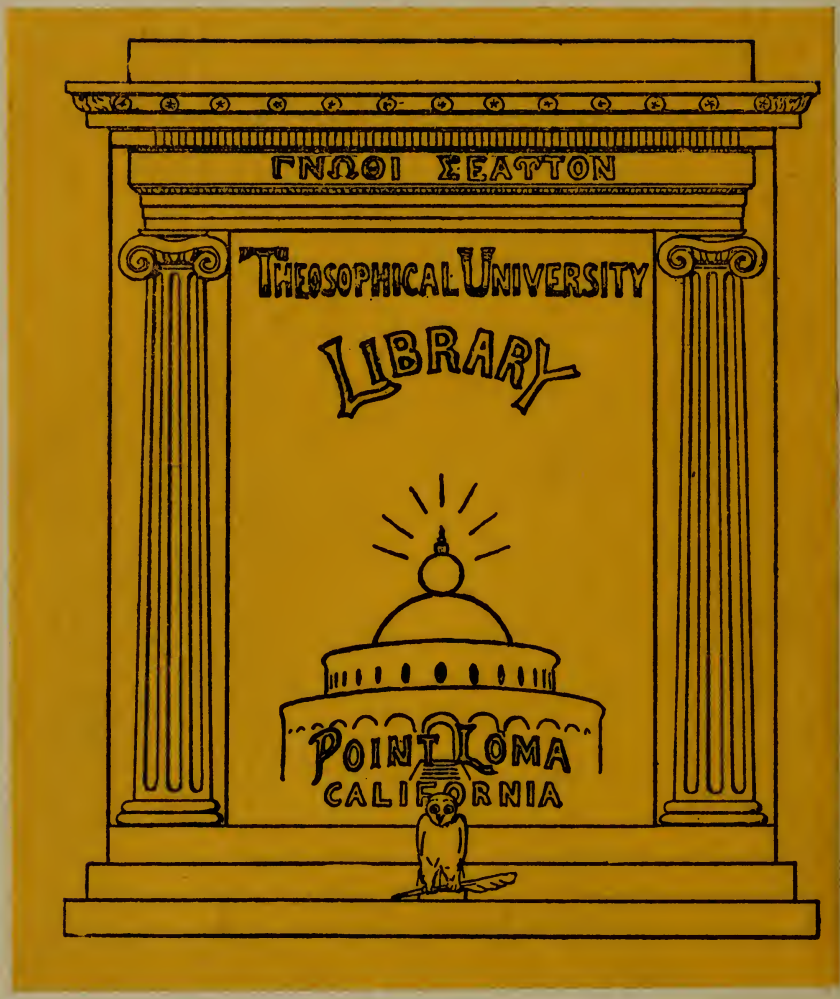

To Julia;

With best Congratulations on the occassion of the anniversary of her birthday.

From brother Epl.

May 23/93

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BY

ANTON RUBINSTEIN

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MUSIC AND ITS MASTERS.

Madame von——— honors me with a visit at my Villa in Peterhof; after the customary salutations, she expresses the wish to inspect my home; in the music-room she sees on the walls the busts of J. S. Bach, Beethoven, Schubert, Chopin and Glinka; in great surprise she asks,

"Why only these and not also Hândel, Haydn, Mozart and others?"

"These are the ones I revere most in my art."

"Then you do not revere Mozart?"

"Himalaya and Chimborazo are the highest peaks of the earth; but that does not imply that Mt. Blanc is a small mountain."

"But Mozart is generally considered this highest peak of which you speak, as he has given

us in his operas the highest of which music is capable."

"I regard the opera as a subordinate branch of our art."

"Then you are in direct opposition to the present ideas of art, which maintain that vocal music is the highest expression of music."

"That I am; first, because the human voice sets a limit to the melody which the instrument does not, and of which the emotions of the human soul, be they joy or sorrow, do not admit; second, because words, even though they voice the most beautiful thoughts, are not capable of expressing the depths of feeling, hence the very correct term *inexpressible*; third, because a human being in a very happy frame of mind may indeed hum, or even carol a melody to himself, but will neither be capable nor desirous of setting words to it—just as in deepest sorrow he may hum a melody to himself, certainly, however, without words; fourth, because never has and never can a tragedy resound in an opera such as occurs in the second movement of the Beethovan trio, D major, or in his adagios of Op. 106, or 110, or in the

adagios of his F major, D minor, F minor, and other string quartettes; or in the prelude E Flat minor of Bach's 'Wohtemperirte Clarin,' or in the prelude E minor of Chopin, just as no requiem, not even that of Mozart, (Confutatis and Lacrimoso therein excepted) is as soul-stirring as the second movement of the Symphony Eroica of Beethoven (a whole mass for the dead)! The same may be said of expressions of joy and of the soul's emotions in general, as they resound in the instrumental works of the great masters. Thus, for instance, the Leonore Overture No. 3 and the Vorspiel to the 2nd act of 'Fidelio,' present to me a much higher conception of this drama than the opera itself."

"But there are composers who write vocal music exclusively; do you, therefore, despise them?"

"Such composers seem to me like people who have only the right to answer questions addressed to them, but not that of asking for themselves, or of expressing and explaining their own ideas."

"But why does every composer aspire to

write an opera, as even Beethoven has done?"

"The idea of more rapid and general appreciation of the composer's work is seductive, the circumstance that gods, kings, priests, heroes, peasants, people of all periods, all countries, and all ranks are to act and sing according to the composer's will, is also alluring to him; but the highest task is always that of illustrating phases of character by explaining them, and that can be done only in instrumental music."

"Yet the public prefers an opera to a symphony."

"Because an opera is easier to understand. Setting aside the interest awakened by the plot, the words explain the music. The symphony demands musical intelligence for thorough enjoyment; and only the smallest percentage of the public possesses that. Instrumental music is the soul of music, but this must be anticipated, fathomed, penetrated and discovered. The public does not take so much trouble when listening to a composition! All the beauties of the instrumental works of the great masters have been brought to people's attention by the enthusiasm of parents or the verdict of

teachers. Therefore they are in later life prepared to admire them *a priori*. Should they be obliged to search for the beautiful themselves, even the works of the classical composers would reap scant approval now-a-days."

"I see that you are entirely prepossessed in favor of instrumental music."

"Not exclusively, of course, but in a great measure."

"Mozart has also written instrumental music of all kinds?"

"And of wonderful beauty, but the Mt. Blanc is not as high as Chimborazo."

"But how do Chopin and Glinka come among your prophets?"

"I am afraid of trying your patience in an attempt to explain that."

"On the contrary. I request you to do so; but on condition that I shall not be compelled to agree with everything you have to say."

"Indeed I am very anxious to hear my views contested, but do not be taken aback too much at my paradoxes."

"I am all attention."

"It has always been a matter of the greatest in-

terest to me to investigate whether and to what extent music does not merely reproduce the individuality and mood of a certain composer, but also may become the echo and resonance of the time, of its historical events and social and ethical standards. I have arrived at the conclusion that it can do this even to the smallest details. Even the fashions and costumes of a time in which a composer writes can be recognized, not to mention the 'cue' which is in general so characteristic of a certain epoch. But all this is true only since music has become a distinct language, and has ceased to be the interpreter of words, that is since the reign of instrumental music."

"But it is generally conceded that music has no definite characteristics: that one and the same melody may sound sad or cheerful, according to the meaning of the words adapted to it."

"Instrumental music is my only standard, and there I find that music is a language, of course of a hieroglyphic kind. He who can decipher hieroglyphics can easily understand what the composer meant to say: and then all that is needed is a suggestion here and there—to furnish

that is the task of the performer. For instance, the first movement of Beethoven's Sonata Op. 81 is termed 'Les adieux,' but the character of the allegro after the introduction is not expressive of the sadness of a parting. How shall these hieroglyphics be understood? The troubles and preparations of departure, the innumerably repeated leave-takings, the sincere sympathy of those remaining behind, the different presentiments of the journey, the good wishes for each other's welfare and safety, altogether the deep and loving sentiments called forth at a leave-taking from our beloved ones. The second movement is entitled 'L'absence;' if the performer is able to reproduce the soulful tone of sadness and longing, no other commentary is necessary. The third movement is superscribed 'Le retour,' then the performer has to declaim a complete poem about the joy of return. The first theme is of inexpressible tenderness; one can almost see the eye glistening with the tear of happiness at the return home; then the interest at the recital of all adventures, but again, and again; 'What happiness to have you back again! you will not leave us (me)

again; we (I) would not let you depart,' etc. Before the conclusion a look of delight, an embrace and then complete happiness. Is it possible not to see that instrumental music is a language? Of course if the first movement is played in a quick, the second in a slow, and the third again in a quick tempo, and if the performer does not possess instinctive desire of expressing the ideas, then instrumental music is void of meaning; and only vocal music is capable of expression. Another example: the Ballade F Major No. 2 of Chopin. Is it possible that the performer would not instinctively feel that he must interpret this composition to the hearer as follows: A wild flower, a gust of wind, then the wind caressing the flower, the resistance of the flower, the stormy ardor of the wind, the imploring of the flower; at the end the flower lies there crushed and broken. The same might be paraphrased thus: The wild flower, a village maiden, the wind a knight. And thus in almost any instrumental piece."

"You are an advocate of program-music?"

"Not entirely. I am in favor of leaving something for the exercise of fancy, of imagi-

nation, not of a given program for a composition. I am convinced that a composer does not merely write notes in a certain tempo and a certain rhythm, but that he puts into them the emotions of his soul, therefore, a program, in the justified hope that the performer as well as the audience will comprehend the program. Sometimes he gives his composition a general name as a guide for the performer and listener; and no more is necessary, for the detailed program of emotions cannot be given in words. Thus I understand program-music, and not in the sense of reflexive tone-painting of different objects or events. That is only admissible in the naïve or comical sense."

"But the 'Symphony Pastorale' of Beethoven is a tone-picture?"

"The pastorale in music is characteristic of the rustic, idyllic, cheerful, simple, expressed by the fifths in base and organ-point.* Besides, imitations of natural phenomena, such as storm, thunder, lightning, represent the

*This does not include the Russian pastorale, the character of which is entirely different and for the most part vocal.

naïve in music which I have just mentioned; just as the imitation of the cuckoo, the twittering of birds. Beyond this tone-painting, the symphony of Beethoven indicates only the mood of nature and of the peasants; and is therefore the most logical expression of program-music."

"The romantic—phantastic, fairies, witches, mermaids, sprites, gnomes, demons, good and bad spirits, etc.—is not entirely conceivable without a program."

"Quite natural, as it is based entirely on naïveté of the composer, as well as that of the audience."

"But every piece of music which nowadays comes to our notice, with the exception of those in which the title indicates the form of the composition, as a sonata, etc., bear some name, hence a program designation."

"The publishers are for the most part to blame for that; they compel the composer to give his composition a name in order to save the public the trouble of having to search for the correct interpretation; then, too, many titles, such as Nocturno, Romanze, Impromptu,

Caprice, Barcarolle, and so forth, have become stereotyped and render it easier for the public to grasp the meaning, and the manner of performing the composition. Otherwise these compositions would be exposed to the risk of receiving names from the public itself, and with what ridiculous result is sufficiently illustrated by one example, the 'Moonlight Sonata.' Moonlight is illustrated in music by a strain, dreamy, meditative, peaceful, melancholy, befitting soft radiance; yet the first movement of the Sonata C sharp minor is tragic from the first note to the last (as the minor key indicates), therefore representing a clouded sky, a gloomy frame of mind; the last movement stormy, passionate, therefore in direct contrast to peaceful radiance; only the short second movement would really admit of a momentary glimpse of moonlight—and this sonata is universally termed the 'Moonlight Sonata.'"

"You find therefore that only the composer himself can give his works the correct designation?"

"That I would not assert; even with Beethoven's titles, with the exception of the Sym-

phony Pastorale,' and the 'Sonata Op. 81,' I can not declare myself satisfied. For I would then have to be content with the fact that he was moved to give his entire composition the designation which the character of *one* movement, or the *theme* in one movement, or an *episodic* passage in one movement suggests. For instance, the 'Sonata Pathetique'—probably so called on account of the introduction, and its episodic repetition in the course of the first movement—for the theme of the first allegro bears a decidedly dramatic and impassioned character, and the second theme therein with its mordents is certainly anything but pathetic; and the last movement, what is there pathetic in that? The second movement might indeed admit of this designation. The same, according to my opinion might be asserted of the Symphony 'Eroica.' The conception of the heroic is expressed in music as allied to the valiant, splendid, bold or also tragic; that the first movement should not be tragic is indicated by the major key; the three-four time also contradicts the tragic-heroic; moreover, the legato of the first theme is a decided indication of the

lyrical character; the second theme is distinctly characteristic of longing; the third of sadness; the fact that powerful passages occur in this movement proves nothing; powerful passages can also appear in a composition of a melancholy nature; but a movement in which all themes are of a decidedly anti-heroic character, I can not call heroic. The third movement is probably a merry hunting piece; the fourth movement (which might indeed be of a heroic character, if it were performed with forte by brass instruments) with variations of which two at most have suggestions of the heroic. Thus the title has been given this symphony only on account of the second movement, which, of course, is decidedly of the tragic-heroic nature. This proves that at that time one could give a name to a piece in which merely one movement justified the designation. Nowadays, it is different—perhaps better—a title demands one and the same characteristic for the entire work from beginning to end."

"You speak only of instrumental music; but then music really only begins for you with Haydn."

"Oh, much sooner! Two centuries were needed before music attained Haydn's perfection of form, and power of tone. I call the time until the second half of the sixteenth century a pre-historic time for music as art; for we know nothing at all about the music of the old Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans; or at least only the scientific progress and this, too, we know only from the Christian era to the above mentioned time. Even about the Volkslied* and the dance measures, these two most popular forms of music, we know little or nothing.† Therefore I regard the above mentioned time as marking the dawn of musical art.‡

"Palestrina's church compositions are the first art productions. I term those art-productions in which the scientific ceases to be the only standard and where the emotions of the soul

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*With the exception of the Ambrosian and Gregorian songs, we cannot state with any degree of certainty, whether volkslieder, with the substitution of sacred words became church songs, or whether church songs, with the adaptation of secular words, became volkslieder.

†About the work of the Troubadours, Minnesänger, even about the Meistersingers of much later date, we know only the literary part, little or nothing of the musical.

‡The Netherlands' epoch I regard even for the art of music, only as a scientific epoch.

are portrayed. In this direction Frescobaldi's organ compositions give this instrument artistic character. Bull, Bird and others endeavor to furnish artistic work for the virginal or clavecin, the piano of to-day."

"Can one trace any relation existing between this dawn of the artistic in music, and the historical events of that time, or with its standard of culture?"

"In church music it is the immediate result of the trials of the Catholic church; as the popes, aroused by the attacks of Protestantism, were impelled to introduce and enforce severe discipline and higher standards in the cloister and church, more serious application and more ideal conception of religious subjects. In secular music it is the natural result of the splendor of the courts of that time, especially of the English court of Elizabeth, as their predilection for music, and for the virginal, caused the composers to write for this instrument amusing and, according to the conception of that time, interesting works."

"Do you then find the emotions of the soul

portrayed so well in their compositions that you could term them artistic?"

"Certainly not; but the first attempts in instrumental music to express ideas."

"Therefore naïve expression of art?"

"Yes, indeed the first program-music in the sense of naïve imitation, of diversion for society. Thus it continues for a whole century; that is to say until the *Suite*, a series of dances then in vogue; in France even longer, as there the two greatest musicians are pleased to pursue just this specialty, and really do accomplish remarkable work, Couperin and Rameau."

"Also in Italy?"

"There, church-music flourishes principally, but is gradually placed in the shade by a new form of art which begins to develop; namely, the opera. In instrumental music, beside numerous organists, only two names can be of interest to us; Corelli for the violin, and D. Scarlatti for the piano.* The latter terms his compositions, sonatas; that is, something that

*I term everything which was written for the virginal, clavecin, clavichord, clavicembalo, spinet, for the piano of modern times, as we can to-day play these works only on this instrument.

is played; that has nothing in common with the later art-form sonata."

"Then as regards instrumental music, which if I understand you aright, is the only kind that interests you, we have not yet advanced beyond a childish stage?"

"Verily, although I would not wish to have under-estimated Scarlatti, Couperin, and Rameau—the first on account of his originality, his humor and his virtuosity; in the second I recognize a most remarkable, gifted, artistic temperament, and a champion in his unimportant time, especially in his country, for higher ideals in music; the third is a pioneer in opera, —he founds the French comic opera,—and besides that, he composes very ingenious compositions for the piano."

"But in England instrumental art, at least for the piano, should have developed, since the beginnings may be traced there."

"There also, vocal music is in the fore-ground, especially in madrigals, and the chorus songs; but it seems as if this nation had, through the medium of Henry Purcell, expressed in music, all that it was capable of expressing. For after

him ensues complete silence; and with the exception of the oratorio and the opera,—both branches nourished and upheld by foreigners,—it has remained thus almost until the present time, when we begin to remark signs of activity. One thing is enigmatical to me—what music may Shakespeare have heard there during his time, which could arouse him to such enthusiasm for this art? For among the poets he is the one who speaks most frequently and most beautifully about music in his works, even about piano playing in his sonnets."

"And in Germany?'

"There, church-music receives a new impetus by Luther's introduction of the choral; as in Italy so here, too, eminent organists appear—Frohberger, Kuhnau, Buxtehude;—in general, however, music is at a low state of development there in comparison with Italy. But simultaneously, in the same year, and in places only a few hours distant from each other, two luminaries appear, by whom there is imparted to musical expression a grandeur, a perfection, a splendor, which equals the Divine command, 'Let there be light.' J. S. Bach, and G. F.

Händel! church-music, organ, piano-virtuosity, opera, even orchestral ideas, everything musical of that time, is represented by these two names, with a perfection which is inconceivable—which is indeed marvelous. With them, music is ushered into its legitmate place among the arts. It is true, music is the youngest branch, but from these two masters it receives the certificate of maturity."

"And do you consider both as equally high peaks?"

"I regard Bach considerably higher, because he is deeper, more earnest, more soulful, more inventive, more incommensurable; but to complete the idea of the art of music in that time demands the union of both names; if for no other reason, than because Händel has been so remarkably successful in opera, which Bach never attempted."

"How does the stand-still of musical art in Germany during the entire seventeenth century, and the sudden appearance of these two luminaries harmonize with your idea that music is the expression of historic events, and of social and ethical standards? You cannot deny

that just at this time great events transpired."

"Music is oftener the resonance than the echo, and so also here. At that period occurred the struggles between Catholicism and Protestantism; during the struggle music was used only for prayer in the church service. The protestant religion secures its equality with the catholic, i. e., is victorious in the contest; and Bach and Hândel appear to sing hymns of victory for it."

"But was not their mode of expression entirely different?

"Certainly. But that is accounted for by the difference in their circumstances and environments: Bach moved in a small world, lived in different towns, which were unimportant in those days, (finally in Leipsic,) surrounded by his large family in his humble calling of cantor of the Thomas Church; his character was earnest, deeply religious, patriarchal; his costtume a plain and simple one; he was not of a very sociable disposition; he was until overcome by blindness, an indefatigable worker. Hândel lived for the most part in the metropolis of London; had intercourse with the court and with the public; was compelled to write

music for the court, and for festive occasions. We know little of his family; little also of his social life. He wore the *Allonge* perruque; and altogether the elegant costume then in vogue in the higher English circles. Grandeur, splendor, superficiality,* to some degree, stamped the character of his works; he wrote operas, church and secular oratorios,— little instrumental work (the most beautiful in his piano suites)—also, little that is deep, soulful, intense."

"Bach is more sympathetic to you, because he has written more instrumental music."

"Not merely for that reason, for he has also written a great deal of vocal music, which is, moreover, inexpressibly great and beautiful, but on account of the qualities I have already mentioned,— but I do not deny the fact that he seems greatest to me when at his organ or at his piano."

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*Proof of this, the possibility of transferring an opera number to an oratorio, and vice versa, an oratorio number into an opera, which, as we know, he sometimes did. Also the rapidity of his work. The "Messiah" he wrote in three weeks and immediately after that. "Samson" in the same short space of time.

"You are probably thinking of his 'Wohltemperirte Clavier?'"

"I presume that you know the anecdote about Benvenuto Cellini. He was to model a great statue for the king of France, but did not have sufficient material for the purpose in his possession; he, therefore, resolved to melt down all his models in order to secure more material. While at this work, he is about to seize a model for a small drinking goblet—then he stopped, he can not destroy that, he values the treasure too highly!—The 'Wohltemperirte Clavier' is such a treasure in music. If, by some mishap, all of Bach's works, including the cantatas, motettes, masses, yes, even the passion music, should be lost, with the exception of this one piece, one would not have to despair, his music would not be annihilated! Add to this the chromatic phantasies, the variations, partiten, inventionen, the English suites, the concertos, the ciacona, the sonatas for the violin and for the piano, and finally his compositions for the organ! Can one truly estimate his greatness?"

"But why does the public call him the great

scholar, identify him with the fugue and deny that he possesses soulful expression?"

"From utter ignorance! To identify him with the fugue is quite right, as he is the very greatest representative of that genre, but in the instrumental Cantilene of Bach there is more soulfulness than can be found in any aria of an opera, or even in church compositions. Liszt's remark that 'There is music which comes to one, and another sort which demands that one should go to it,' is most applicable to Bach. A few do the latter and are rewarded, the general public will not do it and, therefore, has an erroneous opinion of him."

"But the fugue is such a dry, scholastic form of music!"

"With others, but not with Bach. He knew how to express all sentiments imaginable in this form—and to return to the 'Wohltemperirte Clavier,' its fugues are of a religious, melancholy, sublime, serious, humorous, pastorale, dramatic character, only in one respect they are all alike—in beauty! And, then, the preludes, whose charm, variety, perfection and splendor are literally entrancing! That the same man

who has written those soul-stirring compositions for the organ could also write gavottes, bourrées, gigues of such captivating gaiety, sarabandes of such melancholy strain, short concert-pieces, of such charming simplicity, is well-nigh incredible,—and at that I speak of his instrumental compositions alone, but if you consider his gigantic vocal compositions, you will come to the conclusion that a future generation will say of him, as of Homer, 'This was not written by one, but by many.'"

"And in what does Hândel's greatness consist, then?"

"Grandeur, brilliancy, general effect and affect on the masses by simplicity of design and by diatonic (in exact contrast to Bach's chromatic), noble realism and, in a word, by genius. To use an aphorism, I would call Bach, a cathedral, Hândel a royal castle. Those present in the cathedral speak in subdued, timid accents, awed by the vastness of the structure and the sublime idea* underlying the edifice; those present in the castle express admiration

*That is indeed the mood of those listening to a performance of a Bach composition.

and the feeling of subjugation inspired by the splendor, the brilliancy, the grandeur."

"Thus one might infer, that, after these two great heroes in this art, nothing great and beautiful remains to be accomplished in music?"

"In many respects, perhaps, as in church-music, in the oratorio, for the organ, *but modern times demand new expressions in music, and after these two masters there resound new lyric, romantic, dramatic and phantastic ideas, finally also national themes, all represented by very great minds—thus the art of music still makes great progress. A new era dawns, orchestral inspiration supersedes organ inspiration, the opera supersedes the oratorio and the church cantata, the sonata supersedes the suite, the piano-forte supersedes the clavecin, clavicambalo, clavichord, and so forth. But although, until the middle of our century, the opera appears to be the only power which sways the public, the real progress of musical art, nevertheless, can only be traced in the instrumental work with its continuous development, and only

*Altogether I recognize in them the culmination of the first epoch of musical art, that is, according to my system of beginning to count from Palestrina.

in Germany, as Italy and France have turned their attention almost exclusively to vocal music; therefore, as I find in instrumental music alone the ideal of my art, I term music a German art."

"Then we come to Haydn and Mozart?"

"Not yet. One remains to be mentioned before, who, strange to say, only begins to be appreciated according to his merit in modern times, whom I regard the father of the second (instrumental) epoch of musical art and who has truly done remarkable work in cultivating that field, in which the masters you have mentioned could produce so much that is beautiful——that is Philip Emanuel Bach. It is altogether false to say in music that one composer has originated the opera, that one the symphony, that one the sonata and so forth. Everything has gradually developed by the efforts of a great number, but then always one came, who presented the best in some branch and, therefore, became the banner-bearer of that branch."

"Ph. Em. Bach was surely not his father's equal?'

"As regards genius, certainly not; he was, however, the representative of a new period, new aspects in art. By his essay on 'Vortrag und Ausdrucksweise im Clavierspiel,' he elucidated principles, which had to clear the way for further compositions for this instrument, which was becoming more and more popular; but in his compositions the early attempts are noted at later expressions—Haydn's kindliness and naïveté, Mozart's earnestness and vigor, even Beethoven's humor and dramatic power—of course, these are merely hinted at, but, nevertheless, they are already to be found there in the germ. And thus Ph. Em. Bach forms the bridge between J. S. Bach and Haydn, and with that music moves from North Germany to Vienna."

"Quite extraordinary appears this removal of music for half a century, when it again entirely returns to North Germany."

"More and more apparent it becomes that instrumental music is the expression, the echo or reverberation of the time of historical events and ethical standards. It is hardly possible to secure a better portrayal of the last fourth of

the eighteenth century until about the year 1825, than resounds in the works of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert, particularly in regard to Vienna. Of course, all that must not be taken as a literal or plastic expression, but as a tone-picture, figurative, suggestive. In the music of Haydn resounds a kindly, pleasant, blithe, naïve tone; he gives not a thought to mankind's weal or woe, to Welt-geist or Welt-schmerz; almost every Sunday he brings his patron (Prince Esterhazy) a new symphony, or a new string-quartette, the good old gentleman, with his pockets full of bon-bons (in a musical sense) for the children (the public) yet withal prepared to admonish brusquely an unruly one; the faithful, conscientious subject and official, the good, but strict teacher, the benevolent citizen with powdered perruque and cue, with long, wide frock-coat, with jabots and lace *manchettes*, with buckled shoes—I can plainly see this portrait of Haydn in his works; I can hear him talk, not High German, of course, but the Vienna dialect, I can see his audience, ladies, who on account of their toilettes can scarely move, and who placidly nod their heads

and applaud with their fans his graceful melodies and naïve musical facetiousness; gentlemen, who take a pinch of snuff and clap shut their snuff-boxes with the words 'Yes, nothing can compare with our old Haydn.' ('Ya, über unsern alten Haydn geht halt doch nix!')—All this, whenever I play, or hear any of his compositions. We are greatly indebted to him as regards instrumental art; in the symphonic orchestra he has almost reached Beethoven's perfection, he has stamped the string-quartette as one of the noblest and most beautiful branches in music, he has imparted elegance and grace to piano compositions and piano technique, he has extended and arranged instrumental forms; yes, he is an eminent personage in art, yet withal, he always remains only the amiable, smiling, sometimes sarcastic, contented, comfortable, old gentleman; in his 'Creation' as in his 'Seasons,' in his symphonies as in his quartettes, in his sonatas as in his small piano pieces,—in short, in all his musical labors."

"And Mozart?"

"Just as Haydn has been termed the 'old

Haydn' type, so Mozart may be termed the 'young Mozart' type. Although at his time, and amidst his environments, the standard of culture had not progressed beyond Haydn's, yet he is young, sincere, earnest in all his works; his travels in his childhood also exert an influence on his musical thought and perception. The opera becomes his most important field, yet his personality is completely represented in his instrumental works; and there, too, I hear him, like Haydn, speaking the Vienna dialect. The Helios of music I would call him! On all kinds of music he shed his light, and on all he pressed his stamp of divine inspiration. One does not know what to admire most in his work, his wealth of melody, or his technical skill, his crystal clearness, or his power of invention. Besides the symphony, G minor (this unicum in regard to symphonic lyric), besides the last movement of the 'Jupiter Symphony' (this unicum as regards symphonic technique), besides the overtures to the 'Zauberflöte' and to 'Figaro's Hochzeit' (these unica in regard to geniality, spontaneity and divine inspiration) the requiem (this unicum in re-

gard to sympathetic expression of grief), besides the phantasies for the piano, the string-quartette G minor; at this it may not be uninteresting to note how much wealth of melody counterbalances everything else in music; in the quartette, polyphonous treatment of voices is usually requisite; here, however, homophony reigns, the very simplest accompaniment to every theme which arises and one revels in the enjoyment of these heavenly melodies. And then, besides all his wonderful instrumental works, his wonderful operas! It is true, Gluck has achieved a great deal in opera before Mozart, and has indeed opened new vistas—but in comparison to Mozart he is cold, bleak. To Mozart, moreover, belongs the credit of having transferred the opera from the icy realm of mythology to the realism of life, of humanity, and from the Italian to the German. The most remarkable thing about his operas is the musical characterization which he has given every figure therein so that all personalities have become immortal types. A happy choice of subjects and excellent scenic treatment have contributed much toward this success."

"But the text of the 'Magic Flute' is generally regarded as childish and ridiculous."

"I am not at all of that opinion; and were it only for the diversity it offers the artist. Pathetic, phantastic, lyrical, comical, naïve, romantic, dramatic, tragic,—yes it would be difficult to name any expression which is not to be found there. The same pertains to 'Don Juan.' Only the genius of a Mozart could express all that as nobly as he has. But such good texts might also incite other composers who are not so highly gifted, to interesting work."

"But the work which he has done, only he could do."

"Yes, his are divine creations. Everything is flooded with light. At the thought of Mozart, I must exclaim: 'Eternal sunshine in music, your name is Mozart!'"

"It is inexplicable to me how you, with such extravagant admiration for Mozart, still give the palm to others."

"Humanity is languishing for a thunderstorm, people weary of the everlasting sunshine of Haydn and Mozart. They desire earnest expression; they long for dramatic action. The

French revolution startles the world—Beethoven appears."

"You surely would not assert that Beethoven is the musical reverberation of the French revolution?"

"Of course, not of the guillotine—but certainly of this great historical drama—by no means an historical treatise on music, but the musical representation of the tragedy, which proclaims 'Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité.'"

"Yet he follows directly in the footsteps of Haydn and Mozart, at least in the works of his first period."

"The forms in his first period were those in vogue at that time, but the trend of thought even in his youthful productions is quite different. The last movement in his first piano sonata, F major, especially the second theme therein, opens a new vista in expression, conception, tone, even in piano technique. Thus also the adagio in the second sonata, A major, the adagio in the first string-quartette, F major, and so forth. Even his instrumentation in his first three trios is entirely different from that which had been formerly in use. Altogether,

one can recognize in the works of his first period merely the formulas of former composers; just as his costume remains the same for some time; but from these works one can already foresee that the powdered perruque with cue will be replaced by natural hair, that boots, instead of shoes with buckles will change the walk of the man, that the coat, instead of the wide frock with steel buttons, will lend him a different bearing, and already in these works we discern besides the vigorous tone (as in Haydn's and Mozart's compositions), the soulful tone (not to be found in the works of these former masters) and very soon after, besides the æsthetic (as found in Haydn and Mozart), the ethical (not present in their works), and one becomes aware of the fact that he will soon replace the minuet by the scherzo and thus impart to his works a virile character, that he will be able to express the dramatic element, even to a tragic degree in instrumental music, that humor may be accentuated until it becomes irony, that music in general has won an entirely new mode of expression. Marvelously great he is in his adagios, from the most beau-

tiful lyric to the metaphysic, yes, even to the mystic, he rises in this form of expression, but well-nigh wonderful he is in his scherzos! (Several of them I would compare to the jester in 'King Lear'.) In these we can hear the gaiety, laughter, facetiousness, not rarely a bitterness, irony, excitement, altogether a world of psychological expression—and, indeed, not as if emanating from one man, but from an invisible Titan, who is at one time pleased with mankind, at another time incensed, then again provoked to ridicule, then again moved to the verge of tears; enough, quite incommensurable!"

"Well, it would indeed be difficult to enter upon a discussion with you about Beethoven, as all unite in admiring him."

"And yet even in regard to Beethoven my opinions are somewhat at variance with those prevalent. Thus, for example, I believe that 'Fidelio' is the finest opera that has ever been written, because it is a true music-drama in every respect, because with all the truth of its musical characterization it is full of beautiful melody, because, with all its interesting orchestration, the orchestra always allows the

persons on the stage to speak and does not speak for them, because every tone therein emanates from the depths of the soul and, therefore, must penetrate the soul of the listener, —and yet it is generally stated, that Beethoven could not be a composer of opera. I do not consider his 'Missa solemnis' as one of his greatest productions, and yet it is generally so regarded."

"May I ask why it finds no favor in your sight?'

"Because, leaving out of consideration the purely musical part of the work, some of which is unsympathetic to me, I can hear throughout the composition a person who speaks to God, who murmurs against his will, but does not pray to him or worship him, as he has so beautifully in his 'Geistliche Lieder.' Nor do I share the opinion, that the addition of the vocal in the last movement of the Ninth Symphony was desired on his part as a culmination to the musical expression in a technical sense for this symphony in general, but that, after 'the inexpressible' of the first three movements, he wished to introduce something expressed, there-

fore, the last movement with the addition of the vocal (with words). Moreover, I believe, that this last movement should not be the 'Ode an die Freude' ('Ode to Joy'), but the 'Ode an die Freiheit' ('Ode to Freedom'). It is said that Schiller was impelled by the literary censorship of his time to term this ode 'Joy' instead of freedom, and that Beethoven knew this. I believe this implicitly. Joy is not the reward of struggle; it comes suddenly, unexpectedly, but freedom must be striven for—therefore, the theme begins pianissimo in the bass, and must go through many variations before it finally resounds triumphantly in fortissimo; freedom, furthermore, is a very serious subject, therefore, too, the earnest character of the theme; 'Seid umschlungen Millionen,' ('Be embraced, myriads') is also not in agreement with joy, as joy, to a great extent, affects the individual, and cannot include all mankind—and so forth."

"Do you not share the opinion, either, that if Beethoven had not become deaf he would have written some of his compositions differently and others not at all?"

"Not in the least. The period which is

termed his third, was the period of his deafness, and what would music be without his third period? The last pianoforte sonatas, the last string-quartettes, the Ninth Symphony, and so forth, could only have been possible by his deafness. This absolute concentration, his imagery, his tuueful soul, his complaining never before expressed in music, this bound Prometheus, his tragic resonance, (nothing even approximate can be found in any opera), all this could only be explained by his deafness. It is true that he has produced beautiful, yes, unrivaled work even before his deafness; thus, for instance what is the Hell-scene from Gluck's 'Orpheus' in comparison with the second movement from his G major piano concerto? What is any tragedy ('Hamlet' and 'King Lear' excepted) compared with the second movement of his trio D major? What is a whole drama in comparison to his 'Coriolanus Overture?' "

"Nevertheless, the highest, the most wonderful, the most marvelous of his works dates from his deafness. Just as the seer can be imagined blind, that is blind to all his surroundings and seeing only with the soul's perception, so

the hearer can be imagined deaf to all his surroundings, and hearing with the soul's perception. Oh! the deafness of Beethoven! What a source of inestimable unhappiness it was to him, and what an inestimable boon for art and mankind!"

"You have done well to warn me of your paradoxes."

"And even if only that degree of truth which is contained in every paradox is to be found in my views, I will be contented."

"Then with Beethoven the Alpha and Omega has been expressed of music?"

"Not quite. He has taken us with him in his flight to the stars, but from below resounds the strain, 'Oh come down, it is so beautiful also on the earth!' 'Kommt doch herunter, auf der Erde ist es ja auch so schön!' This strain Schubert sings for us."

"There you are contradicting yourself, for he was surely a vocal-composer *par excellence.*"

"But not in the pretentious sense of the opera (in which he only accomplished little), but in the sense of the song,—the only justifiable vocal music besides church-music—and he

has, moreover, created so many and such wonderful instrumental compositions! I consider Beethoven the culmination point of the second epoch of musical art, and Schubert the father of its third epoch. Yes, a remarkable personage in music is this Schubert! While one can discern in all others (even in the greatest) some preparation, he appears to be entirely original(if there were any composers who served him as models, they have remained unknown to us) and indeed just as much so in vocal as in instrumental music. He creates a new lyric, the lyric-romantic in music; before him the lied was either the naïve couplet, or the tedious ballade, stiff, dry, with recitative, with tiresome cantilena, scholastic form, shallow accompaniment, and so forth. He creates the 'Stimmungslied,' which comes from the heart and reaches the heart—the musical poem of a poetic theme, the melody which explains the words; he creates a branch of art, in which indeed much has been produced after him that is very beautiful, but, nevertheless, cannot vie with his work. What can compare with the 'Winter-reise,' the 'Schwanen-gesang,' the 'Mül-

lerlieder' and many more? Besides, he also creates the small 'Clavierstück'—and here he seems most inexplicable to me! Living at the same time and at the same place with Beethoven, and yet not at all influenced by him in his musical striving, neither in the symphony, nor in chamber-music, nor in pianoforte music. Just compare Beethoven's 'Bagatellen' with Schubert's 'Moments Musicals,' or with his 'Impromptus.' Yes, just as original as he is in his lied, so he is in these small pianoforte compositions, in his 'Rhapsodie Hongroise,' for four hands, in his marches, his waltzes, in short in all of his works. Only in one branch he does not attain the highest heights, that is in the sonata; but Beethoven had really said the last word in this form and this epic form was contrary to the clearly defined lyric-romantic nature of his work."

"Altogether he is accused of disregarding form."

"This peculiarity of introducing whole songs into his larger compositions (heavenly themes with earthly phraseology) has imposed lengths upon them (especially notable in his sonatas

for the pianoforte, with the exception of two or three of them). Schumann has so correctly termed them 'heavenly lengths.'"

"Did he really have so little intercourse with Beethoven?'

"They knew but did not appreciate each other, at least this was acknowleged by Schubert. Beethoven was either entirely engrossed with himself (toward musicians he was often brusque and repellant, his deafness also isolated him to some degree) or he moved in the highest circles of society (Erzherzog Rudolph was his pupil, friend, and patron). Schubert was a true Vienna child of the people. Volksgarten, street, coffee-house, and bohemians his world, the Vienna dialect(as with Haydn and Mozart) his tongue. His songs were seldom heard in public, for the most part only in the circles of friends; the same is true of his instrumental music, for he himself never heard his symphony C major, performed! Thus these two geniuses, living at the same time, at the same place, remained almost strangers to each other. A sad proof, how little music (with the exception of the opera) was at that time the

property of the public, but merely afforded diversion to particular circles!"

"He died young?"

"And not until quite a time had elapsed after his death, has recognition been accorded him, even to his songs. In fact, Bach has only been saved from oblivion since the year 1830, and Beethoven's third period has, even until the greater half of our century, been designated as a morbid, yes, crazy period—even by musicians.

Schubert's great productiveness is inexplicable to me when I consider the short duration of his life."

"'He has sung as the birds sing,' always and incessantly; from a full heart; with a clear throat; he has simply voiced his inspirations, without polishing his work much."

"You do not mean to imply that this was a merit?"

"God has created woman, surely the most beautiful of his creations, but full of faults; he has not endeavored to improve her, in the full conviction that her charms would counterbalance all her faults. So Schubert with his compositions.

His wealth of melody atones for all deficiencies, if there really are any. One of his most sympathetic characteristics is his naturalness; he harmlessly divulges the merry side of his character as 'a jolly Wiener boy.' So in the string-quartette, C major, the last movement; and also the last movement in the pianoforte sonata, D major; and in the last movement of the fantasia, G major. And then the variety and versatility of his creations! Among his songs, 'Die Krähe,' 'Der Doppelgänger,' 'Du bist die Ruh,' 'Der Atlas,' 'Aufenthalt,' 'Der Erlkönig;' then his waltzes,—side by side with the string-quartettes, A minor, and D minor; his 'Hungarian Rhapsodie,' side by side with his 'Moments Musicals;' the symphony C major;—yes, I say it once more and repeat it a thousand times, Bach, Beethoven, and Schubert are the highest pinnacles of music!"

"You have not yet explained to me what entitles Chopin and Glinka to a place in such society."

"Vienna has had its day; music returns to its former home, Northern Germany.'

"You mean to say German music; for Méhul,

Grétry, Cherubini, Spontini, Rossini, and others have not lived in Germany."

"These were exclusively composers of vocal music, and, therefore, for me no representatives of the art."

"Who according to your opinion forms the next link in that chain?"

"Weber."

"If he had never written his operas, would you still consider him a representative artist?"

"Not in the fullest sense of the word. Yet, I could not omit him, as his compositions for the piano, the great innovations in his treatment of the orchestra, and especially his overtures, give sufficient evidence of his greatness. Yet you are right in considering his operas his greatest achievements. It is strange to remark how he has become a model in all kinds of his works. He has been imitated in everything; Volkston,—Freischütz; the romantic-phantastic—Oberon; the lyric-romantic—Euryanthe; his arias, his hunting songs, his overtures, also his piano compositions, (Concertstück, etc.) His sonatas for piano, although not equal to Beethoven's in height of invention, in depth

of sentiment, in earnestness of conception, and in intrinsic worth, are nevertheless very remarkable compositions. Although he is in piano music, a virtuoso composer—"

"What do you mean by that?"

"Compositions in which the passage appears as a personality, where brilliancy and effect are principally aimed at, even at the cost of the musical idea. But if we consider to what superficiality that branch has degenerated after him, one can only regard him with respect."

"Do you value opera so lightly that you do not think it worth while to mention its development side by side with instrumental music?"

"If I wished to demonstrate merely my own sympathies, I would have to mention Mendelssohn next. But you want my opinion about everything, so we will first have to traverse two fields which have been cultivated most abundantly, and which have satisfied and delighted the public far more than anything before mentioned. These are in vocal music—the opera and in instrumental, virtuosity."

"Concerning the opera you would probably begin with Italy?"

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"Both kinds originate there. The opera (buffa and seria) has rapidly developed there to such a degree of excellence, that with the exception of France, where it appears with Lulli, in French, it has asserted its place in the whole world, in the Italian language, until the first half of this century. The reason for this may be that the climate as well as the language of Italy, helped to produce the best singers and *primadonnas.* But to this circumstance also may be ascribed the fact that the creations of Italian composers waxed more and more insignificant. They were obliged to write for the singers, beautiful cantilenas and great colorature arias, regardless of the action of the drama, merely to give the singers an opportunity of displaying their art. For that reason they had to assign to the orchestra the insignificant part of accompaniment. To the earnest musician, therefore, Italian opera is, at the present day, synonymous with superficiality and artificiality. Quite justly so from an æsthetic stand-point; but not so much so from one strictly musical. For a beautiful cantilena is still of some value; and we find a great number of them in the

Italian opera. The golden age of Italian opera is the period before Mozart; the number of composers is legion, and these are considered the classic writers of this branch. The most celebrated composers among these, before and after Mozart, are: Salieri, Cimarosa, Paesiello, Paêr, and later Rossini, whose 'Barber of Seville,' is a jewel of freshness, melody, humor, and characterization, and may truly be termed a master-piece. The same may be said of 'Comte Dry;' 'Wilhelm Tell' is also very remarkable for colorature, dramatic action, and even for orchestral work. The overture might be considered a work of art, had he substituted something else for the final allegro. In his other operas also, we find, side by side with the trivial and inartistic, much that is meritorious. It is notable that he, and the other Italian composers before and after his time, when writing for the Parisian stage in the French language, have given more attention to the orchestra, and maintained a higher standard in their compositions, than in the operas they wrote for Italy in the Italian language. Rossini has for a long time completely ruled the public

taste, until the appearance of Bellini, and soon after of Donizetti. Both of these, the former by means of his truthfulness, the latter by his temperament and modern style of dramatizing, have (with the exception of two or three operas) entirely supplanted him on the program. The public as well as the artists have enthusiastically admired them, and only the French grand opera could vie with them. And who, having heard their operas sung by Rubini, Tamburini, Lablache, by Sontag, Grisi, Persiani, Tadolini, Jenny Lind, etc.—as I have—could help being enthusiastic, about them? In my youth, I myself, was enraptured with them."

"And has Italy accomplished nothing in instrumental music?"

"Corelli and Scarlatti we have already mentioned; and after these latter composers, nothing remarkable has been produced for the piano. Clementi is of great importance as regards virtuosity and in a pedagogical sense; but we will speak of him later; I might also mention Boccherini who has written a great deal of chamber-music for string-instruments which, however, is far inferior to Haydn's. Remarkable

achievements have been made only in violin technique and in compositions for this instrument; after Corelli, Nardini, Tartini, Viotti, and especially Paganini have made this instrument the most important after the pianoforte."

"The next in turn is France, as only in Italy, Germany, and France, music has a noticeable development, while in other countries it is scarcely worthy of mention."

"Yes, till the year 1830; but from that time lights of different magnitude appear in all parts of Europe; music becomes more and more common property, and almost every country has a number of more or less renowned representatives of the art."

"But 'school' is only to be found in these three countries."

"From Rameau to Berlioz, with a few exceptions, only opera is fostered in France; the French had a special preference for comic opera, i. e. opera with dialogue. Foreigners, for the most part, whom the French proclaim representatives of the French school, (of course, only if they wrote in the French language) cultivated the so-called grand opera; that is to say, opera

with recitative. Thus they call Lulli, Cherubini, Spontini, Rossini (Italians); and Gluck, Herold, Meyerbeer, (Germans), 'Chefs de l'ecole Français.' The English, too, call Hândel an English composer, because he wrote his oratorios in the English language. I cannot say that I dislike that kind of patriotism."

"There is surely more pride in it, than in ignoring a native artist, educated in the country and confessing its religion, merely because he bears a foreign name."

"The *opera comique* is the real type of French music. Much may be found therein that is charming. Grétry, Méhul, Monsigny, Dalayrac, Isouard, Berton, Boieldieu, Adam, Auber, Grisar, Massé, Bizet, Delibes, and others do not only deserve the respect of their own nation, but the recognition of all nations. Many of them have also written grand opera as Méhul (whose 'Joseph in Egypt' equals the best compositions of its kind) Auber—'Massiniello'—and others. But the character of their work is in general always *opera comique.* It is noticeable that their treatment of the orchestra is much more interesting than that accorded to

it by the Italians. Lively rhythm, ingenuity, piquancy, refinement, and elegance stamp French musical compositions. These characteristics can be found in their creations, even in their symphonies of the present date. What they have entirely neglected, is the lovely, simple, graceful 'chanson;'—and that is to be regretted. They have become *phraseurs* in music, even in comic opera. Other nations have the same tendency; it seems the general short-coming of our time. Since the second empire, *opera comique*, that charming, witty, gay, interesting *genre*, has been entirely superseded by the operetta, in which charm has degenerated into frivolity, wit into stupidity, gaiety into vulgarity —a kind of comic journal set to music, à *la journal pour rire*. The talented originator of this branch was Offenbach; he has had many imitators, Hervè, Lecocq, Audran, and others, for something like that pleases! Lately this branch seems to lose ground in France; and in Germany we notice the tendency to rise to comic opera in its former sense. Grand opera was as beforesaid, for the most part in the hands of foreign composers, who, however, had

to adapt themselves to the claims of the French public. They had to compose in the French language, and pay great attention to declamation. The latter also, forms the character of the French grand opera. Already Lulli has constructed an entire system in that direction, and after him Gluck, who worked in opposition to the encroaching Italian method; also Cherubini, and Spontini (that musical echo of Napoleon's military spirit), have remained faithful to it. Later the public demanded in grand opera also, an interesting, almost symphonic orchestration, interesting action, variety of situations and the additional attraction of the ballet, and altogther, a great scope, (that grand opera should have at least five acts). Meyerbeer has conformed to most of these conditions, and has, therefore, become the representative of French grand opera. This composer has been over-estimated in France and underestimated by German critics. His artistic conscience must surely accuse him of some sins, such as morbid vanity, an inordinate desire for immediate success, lack of self-criticism, subjugation to the bad taste of an ignorant public,

varnish in musical characterization. But he has also very grand qualities: Comprehension of the drama, remarkable treatment of the orchestra, and ensemble, high dramatic polish, and virtuosity. Many musicians who criticise him would be glad to equal him. Surely 'Robert le Diable,' 'The Prophet,' and especially 'Les Huguenots' are extraordinary opera compositions. Next to him comes the composer Halévy; his 'Jewess' is a work worthy of note. Furthermore I can mention, with the exception of Rossini, Donizetti and Verdi, whose operas are popular there, only a few more French composers who cultivate grand opera, these are Thomas, Gounod, Saint-Saêns, Massenet, Reyer and others."

"And what of instrumental music?'

"It begins with Berlioz and is still in a stage of development at the present time."

"We will then turn to Germany in considering the opera?"

"The first attempts at opera in the German language, at the beginning of the eighteenth century are merely of historical and archæological interest. Comic opera only, was accepta-

ble in the native tongue, while grand opera was represented throughout Germany only in Italian. German serious opera, with a few exceptions (Kayser, Fuchs, Mattheson, Hiller), begins after Mozart, and flourishes some time as Singspiel, and Liederspiel; i. e., with a spoken dialogue. Here we come to a subject which always appears to me a sore spot in our art: If opera is to be a branch of art, it can only be so if we can voluntarily adopt a conventional lie; for if a part is sung, a part spoken, then a part sung, and a part spoken again, how is it possible to maintain an illusion? Even in the French vaudeville, where after a witty remark, or interesting dialogue, a few words, as for instance 'Bon jour, Madame! comment vous portez vous?' are sung, this seems intolerable to me. How much more so in a serious, dramatic, or phantastic piece (opera)! Then I regard the melodramatic in French sensational tragedy, where at a poisoning scene, or a midnight-robbery, etc., the violins *con sordini* begin to play in tremulo, as more justifiable. When I consider that Mozart has written his 'Magic Flute,' Beethoven his 'Fidelio,' Weber his

'Freischütz,' with a spoken dialogue, I feel quite unhappy."

"Does the mixture of poetry and prose in Shakespeare's pieces annoy you?"

"There the different personalities speak differently; the unimportant people speak in prose, the important ones in poetry; but in the opera, the same person who has just been singing, begins to speak, or the one who has spoken begins to sing. Alas for the prevailing taste! What a horrible thing it is for art!"

"To my knowledge there are no Italian operas with a spoken dialogue."

"The Italians have invented for the comic opera the 'Recitativo secco,' a very correct kind of musical speech—in grand opera there is only singing."

"So they take precedence before all other nations also in this respect?"

"But perhaps only in this respect."

"Gluck, Mozart, in fact, German opera owes its development to Italian influence."

"The influence on Gluck and Mozart was but slight, only in regard to the language and prevailing forms. But it cannot be discovered in

their harmonies, nor their musical expressions, nor their ideas. Gluck is neither a French nor an Italian musician, although he wrote in these two languages; nor is Mozart an Italian musician, although he wrote in that language. Gluck and Mozart have written their own original music; and the Germans have claimed them as their own, because they have divined German art, even although they wrote in foreign languages."

"Are you in favor of national work in music?"

"The nationality of a composer, the country in which he was born and educated, will always be perceptible, even though he lives in another country, and writes in another language. This has been proved by Hândel, Gluck, Mozart, and others. There is also reflexive national composition, which is much in vogue at the present day. This may be very interesting, but can have no claim to cosmopolitan sympathy, and can inspire only a sort of ethnographical interest. A melody which will move a native of Finland to tears, might leave a Spaniard cold; a dance rhythm which would arouse a Hungarian to dancing, might not disturb an Italian's

composure. Dance measures of one nation may be adopted by another, and the people becoming accustomed to them may enjoy them; (as for instance the waltz is danced in every part of the world) but no two nations will feel the same sympathy, and the same enthusiasm for these dance melodies, or other music. The composers of reflexive national work must content themselves with the appreciation (sometimes deification) of their country; and that is not to be despised, as it is of high value and affords much gratification."

"You have not yet given me the names of the German opera composers."

"The nomenclature is exceedingly numerous, in comic opera beginning with Dittersdorf, Schenk, Müller to Lortzing, Flotow, Götze, and others; in the lyric and dramatic from Winter, Weigl, Kreutzer to Wagner, Goldmark, Kretschmar, Nessler etc., in operetta from Strauss, Suppé, Milloecker, to the prodigies of the present time. You are acquainted with the most prominent ones, and the others, though swelling the numbers, do not contribute much to art."

"You spoke of another field we would have to traverse."

"Yes, the second field next to the opera, but ere we turn to that, we will consider instrumental music from the time of Beethoven.'

"Is there anything notable before Schumann?"

"But few German composers have written vocal music exclusively; most of them have cultivated the various branches. Weber was composer not only of operas, but also of songs and piano pieces. Spohr, the head of German violinists, was a composer in all branches, distinguished in all, but addicted to mannerism and monotony. Therefore, he will be ephemeral; works, however, like his opera 'Jessonda;' his symphonies 'Die Weihe der Töne' and C minor; some of his chamber-music, but especially his violin concerts, will undoubtedly secure for him a high rank in the literature of music. Marschner, next to Weber and Wagner the most remarkable German opera composer, has also written much instrumental music; also Lachner, Reissiger and others.

"And Mendelssohn?"

"In order to give a just estimate of this composer, we must consider a period in which some good vocal music was produced, but in which the instrumental music must be characterized as 'Kapellmeister-music.'"

"What is the meaning of that designation?"

"It has reference to composers who, being void of all creative inspiration, and lacking originality, have imitated certain models."

"And who were these mechanics in art?"

"All composers of that time. I speak of instrumental music, and must therefore repeat the names: Marschner, Lachner, Reisiger, Lindpaintner, Fesca, Kalliwoda and others."

"But you have just designated Marschner as a genius?"

"His operas 'Vampyr,' 'Templar and Jüdin,' and especially his 'Hans Heiling,' entitle him to a high rank of honor among the composers; but in his trios for piano, and instrumental compositions, and even in the overtures to his operas, he belongs to the above category. As to Lachner I must add that in his old age he was slightly affected with modernism, so that in his orchestra suites, old mastership and

technique were united with regenerated potency of invention. If you take a retrospect of that time you find the following: In opera it was an era of imitation, in oratorio and church music, dullness and pedantry, in symphony and chamber-music the most shallow scribbling, and in piano music the most superficially composed variations and fantasias. Can you conceive how salutary for art Mendelssohn's advent must have been?"

"But for what reason is he at the present day depreciated even by artists?"

"The principal cause lies in the great respect he enjoyed during his life, which must have called forth a sort of reaction; further more, it cannot be denied that in comparison with other artists he was deficient in depth, earnestness, greatness. But he has retrieved his faults by so many good qualities that it is my conviction that people will return to him with love and reverence to rejoice in his art."

"Did he compose mostly instrumental music?"

"All branches of music have found in him a noble champion. His compositions were master works in perfection of form, technique, melody,

and creative-power. His 'Mid-summer-night's Dream,' is a musical revelation. Original and ingenious in invention, in orchestration, in humor, in the lyric, the romantic, and the fairy-like. His 'Songs without words' are treasures as to sympathetic expression and melodiousness; his 'Six Preludes and Fugues for Piano' are an excellent combination of modern character and ancient form, particularly the first one (E minor); his concerto for violin is unique in beauty, freshness, technique, and noble virtuosity; his overture to 'Fingal's Cave' is a real gem. These are in my opinion works of genius; but also his oratorios, psalms, symphonies, songs, and chamber-music, are works which secure him a place among the heroes of art. In general I would call his music the 'Swan's song of classical work.'"

"His music has never affected me strongly."

"'Wer nie sein Brod mit Thrânen ass,' etc. Mendelssohn and also Meyerbeer were children of rich parents. They received the best education and were in their parental home surrounded by the most intellectual and distinguished society. They did not cultivate art as a means of

support; but from an inspired impulse. They experienced, at most, the bitterness of ungratified ambition and offended vanity in the beginning of their careers, but were not worried by the meaner troubles of life, such as means of support, lack of a remunerative position; and this undisturbed serenity echoes in their works; no tears, no bitterness, no remorse, almost no complaint."

"And yet Mendelssohn has so high a place in your regard?"

"Certainly; because he has given the world such an abundance of beautiful and perfect creations, and because he has saved instrumental music from extinction."

"And his contemporary Schumann?"

"The fresh breath of romanticism which breathed through the literature of all countries in the years from 1825 till 1850, found its musical echo in Schumann; even the opposition against the set formulas, scholasticism and the pseudo-classic, had him for its musical champion. He fought against the Philistines, (against Kapellmeister-music, against Zopfkritik, against the corrupted taste of the pub-

lic) and this gave him the stimulus to new musical compositions, in particular for piano, at the beginning of his artistic career; he was surely more intense, warmer, more soulful, more romantic, richer in fancy, and more subjective than Mendelssohn. He is most sympathetic to me in his compositions for piano (Kreisleriana, Phantasiestücke, etudes symphoniques, carneval, phantasie C major, and many others, are gems; and his Clavier-concerto, A minor, is as unique in the literature of the piano, as Mendelssohn's violin concerto in violin literature. His piano quintet E flat major is also original in beauty, freshness, brilliancy and melody in the style of chamber music); next I value his songs; in the third rank, I would place his works for orchestra, and larger vocal-compositions. New arrangements (not always striking, but always interesting), new rhythm, varied and new harmonies, new forms with that finest invention, and wonderfully charming melody;— all this stamps his work to be the finest we possess in music."

"Is he then absolutely faultless?"

"I did not assert that. Some of the defects

of his compositions are monotony of rhythm, extravagance of harmony; a partiality to song melody in his piano compositions, which deprives them of flight of imagination and great scope; lamentably faulty instrumentation in his orchestral works and chamber-music (duplicating of voices), and sometimes only contrapuntal treatment of the singing voice in his more important vocal compositions, but all these faults are overbalanced by the wonderful beauty of the ideas."

"How do Schumann's songs compare with Schubert's?"

"It is difficult to compare them. To me Schubert's song is more sympathetic, because it is more unaffected, simpler, of greater tenderness; on the other hand I find Schumann's songs often finer and more poetical. Surely the literature of song by Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn, also of some later composers, is a precious jewel in the crown of German lyrics."

"Who comes next in turn?"

"He whose presence among my chosen ones has so astonished you."

"Chopin! Now I am curious!"

"You have noticed that all the great composers I have named before have made the piano the medium of their deepest and sublimest thoughts. But Chopin is the bard of the pianoforte, the rhapsodist, the spirit, and the soul of it. I do not know whether this instrument inspired him, or he the instrument. But only a thorough identification of both could produce these compositions. Tragical, romantic, lyrical, heroic, dramatic, fantastic, soulful, tender, dreamy, brilliant, grand, simple,—all possible ideas are contained in his compositions for that instrument, and find in it expression most sublime."

"But that is excessive praise!"

"Shall I give you the names of the compositions that justify it? His preludes (I consider them the pearls of his works), the greater part of his etudes, his nocturnes, his polonaises, E flat minor, C sharp minor, F sharp minor, A flat major, particularly the one in A major, which is to me like a picture of Poland's greatness, and the one in C minor, which unfolds to me a picture of Poland's extirpation; his four ballads, his scherzos B minor, and B

flat minor, his sonatas B flat minor and B minor, the first of which is an entire drama with the last movement (according to the typical funeral march), which I would interpret, 'The night wind moaning over the graves in the churchyard;' and in addition to that, last not least, his mazurkas! Excepting his polonaises and mazurkas, he has not written Polish(reflexive) music; but in all his compositions one can hear him tell of and exult in Poland's former greatness, and again, one can hear him sing, mourn, lament, and weep in the most touching manner over its misfortunes and defeat. From a purely musical standpoint, how beautiful in invention, how perfect in technicality and form, how interesting and new in harmony, and oftentimes how great! Then we must not forget how thoroughly original he is with the exception of some of his first works, where the influence of Hummel is noticeable. It is also very remarkable that he is the only composer who, recognizing his specialty, composes only in his speciality, pianoforte; and, excepting a few songs, leaves no other work. He was the soul of the pianoforte!"

"I, too, find him very sympathetic; but I had no idea that he could be made the subject of such deification."

"Moreover, he appears to me like the dying breath of the third epoch of our art."

"I would request you to explain to me more explicitly your division of epochs. It is not quite plain to me."

"I am not giving you a dissertation on the history of music; we are merely conversing about the general development of music, and about the representatives of the art. As you know, I reckon Palestrina as the beginning of music as an art, and count from him the first epoch of the art, which I designate as the organ and vocal epoch. And as the greatest expounders of this epoch and as the culmination point, I regard Bach and Händel. The second epoch I call the instrumental epoch; that is, the epoch of the development of the pianoforte and orchestra, and reckon it from Philip Emanuel Bach, with Haydn and Mozart, including also Beethoven; the latter as the greatest representative and culminating point of that epoch. The third epoch, the lyric-romantic, I count from

Weber, Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Chopin whom I consider its last representative. All further information you can find in a history of music."

"I will try to become familiar with your ideas."

"Now comes the second name which surprised you so much—Glinka. We have spoken about the idea of nationality in music. You know my opinion about it. But Glinka is so remarkable in this respect that he surpasses all who cultivated that specialty. Schiller says: 'The gods come never alone,' and that is also true in art; for every new idea in art you find whole groups arising; so also in regard to the idea of nationality. We find the attempts in different countries: Erkel in Hungaria, Smetana in Bohemia; the greatest number of composers in Sweden and Norway: in England, Balfe and at present numerous others, etc. All these offer in addition to a romanza, or a chorus song, or a dance of national character, also 'allerwelts-music.' Not so Glinka; from the first note to the last, as well in the overture, as also in the vocal part of an opera (recitative, aria and ensemble), all is of national character, in

melody, harmony and even treatment of orchestra. He generally depicts two nationalities, as in his 'Life for the Tsar' both Russians and Poles, and in '*Russlan und Liudmilla*' both Russians and Circassians. The characters of both nationalities are floating through the melodies with thorough musical perfection and technique."

"He worked according to Italian models?"

"He has accepted the form of the Italian opera, which was exclusively predominant in Russia until lately. But in melody, harmony, invention, and sentiment, his compositions are thoroughly and exclusively national."

"To my knowledge, he wrote vocal music exclusively."

"He has not written much instrumental music, but very remarkable is a capriccio about the volkslied 'Kamarinskaja,' which has indeed become a model for Russian instrumental music, and which betokens extraordinary genius, he also wrote the beautiful entre-acts music for the tragedy 'Prince Cholmsky,' in which the national Jewish character is very distinctly emphasized, intensely interesting orchestra-music on Span-

ish volkslieder and dances, some pieces for the piano alone, but his principal work is undeniably the opera, and yet he is one of my five heroes."

"I cannot say that I entirely coincide with everything you say, yet I agree with you concerning Bach, Beethoven and Schubert and can also comprehend why you are so enthusiastic about Chopin and Glinka, since you yourself are a piano-virtuoso and a Russian."

"Before entering on the present era of composition (the fourth epoch in the art) we must investigate the subject of virtuosity. This is divided into two epochs, the epoch until the first half of this century, when virtuosos for the most part performed their own compositions, and the succeeding epoch, where they are for the most part only performers of the compositions of others. The former epoch only is of interest to us as this alone could exert an influence on the development of music. But little need be said of brass and reed instruments, as the virtuosos on these instruments could only advance in a technical sense, that is, in regard to the construction of these instruments

and their use in the orchestra. With the exception of a few works which the great masters (Hândel, Haydn) have written for them, the literature for these instruments presents a discouraging aspect. We have discussed the violinists up to Paganini and Spohr; if we add to these the names Rode, Kreutzer, Molique, Lipinsky, Beriot, Vieuxtemps, David, Ernst, Wieniawsky, whose compositions were of great importance for that instrument, although not for art in general (like Bach's, Beethoven's, and Mendelssohn's) we can conclude the theme. The literature for the violincello, whose former representatives are Romberg, Dupont, and others, and of late Servais, Davidoff, Popper and others, is of still less significance for art in general than is violin literature. But I must not omit mention of the great influence which Paganini exercised on the violin, Servais on the violincello in a technical sense, and, therefore, of their significance for art in general. About the influence of the vocal-virtuosos on composers (and it was not a beneficial one) we have said enough, and thus we may now return to the instrument which takes the foremost rank

of all, namely the pianoforte. On account of its compass, which is only inferior to that of the organ (over which, however, it possesses the advantage of finer shading of *piano* and *forte*) it has become the most attractive instrument for the musician; it also affords him the opportunity of controlling greater volume, as well as the possibility (so dear to every musician, since with any other instrument he can not depend on his own efforts, but requires the aid of others) of individual performance; thus, the pianoforte has become the photographic camera of the musician, the dictionary, the musical encyclopædia of the public, *the* instrument of music! All great composers were at the same time virtuosos, of whom we have already spoken, now we must dwell on those virtuosos who were at the same time composers. Here we must start with Clementi, whom we might term the father or the teacher of modern pianoforte virtuosity. We do not know who were the teachers of Scarlatti, Couperin, Rameau, Bach, Händel, Haydn, Mozart, and even Beethoven, and can only wonder how they could have attained their technique (virtuosity), especially

Scarlatti, Bach, and Beethoven, whose technique remains a hard nut for us to crack even at the present day. For us Clementi is the first expounder of piano-pedagogic and his 'Gradus ad Parnassum' even to-day is the surest ladder to virtuosity. His sonatas, some of which are void of artistic worth are, however, the type of that scholastic period, where, under the guise of classical form, chief stress is laid on virtuoso technique. Not the facade, but a side portal in the temple of art is inscribed with names such as Dussek, Steibelt, Hummel, Cramer, Moscheles, Czerny, Field, Kalkbrenner, Herz, and many others, with whom first the sonata declines into insignificance, when the piano concerto is cultivated merely for the sake of the passage; polaccas, rondo brilliante and à la cosaque become their favorite style of composition, and, moreover, I am sorry to admit, the chief delectation of the public. The variation is especially abused. This, the oldest of all instrumental forms, which in Beethoven's works aspires to ethical expression, sinks to insipidity in Herz's productions; with Mendelssohn, however, and particularly with Schu-

mann, it again develops into beauty and grace.* The etude of pedagogical nature constitutes the only valuable production of that time."

"The names you have enumerated are, however, mainly contemporaries of Beethoven, Schubert, and Weber?"

"Yet they have completely governed public taste. For, as regards his pianoforte compositions, Beethoven, soon after his death, became only the secret cult of a few music-fanatics, only two or three of his sonatas attained some degree of popularity; Schubert's compositions for the piano were entirely ignored, and although Weber's were similar to the prevailing style, this is true only of a few of them, which were, moreover, a more serious expression of the style then in vogue. Hummel, Moscheles and Field, moreover, gleam like meteors among the virtuoso composers just enumerated. Hummel, had he not been afflicted with pedantry and love for effect, might be counted among the true composers, for works such as his sonata F sharp

*Mendelssohn has even felt impelled to entitle his variations, 'Variations Sérieuses,' in order to distinguish them from the variations then prevalent.

minor, his four-handed sonata A flat major, his septette, his concerto A minor, and, especially, B minor, entitle him to a place in the 'parterre de rois' in the temple of art. The same is applicable to Moscheles, whose concerto G minor will always remain a very beautiful composition; not withstanding his stiff scholasticism, he was also one of the first to compose the phantasie (not variation) on opera motives, thus introducing vocal and dramatic performance on the pianoforte. Field works on a small canvas, it is true, but achieves influential results with his nocturnes. But now (simultaneously again) appear Thalberg, Liszt and Henselt, three personalities, who give the pianoforte entirely new character, qualifying the scale and passage style to song with accompaniment (arpeggio) to orchestral, to polyphonous (breadth of harmony) treatment. Thalberg and Liszt, discarding the variation on an opera theme, introduce the fantasia on several opera themes, not with Moscheles' simplicity, however, but with hitherto unknown additions for the display of virtuosity, as a culminating effect, letting two themes resound at the same time. Liszt and

Henselt impart æsthetic character to the etude, transferring it from the pedagogical to the artistic realm (like the etude in the art of painting), giving each a name or title ('Mazeppa,' 'Si oiseau j'étais, à toi je volerais,' 'Orage, tu ne saurais m' abattre,' and so forth*). All three introduce the transcription of songs and orchestra compositions for the piano, also of dance measures with powerful, brilliant arrangement, and in fact, usher in a new era for the pianoforte, an era of transcendental virtuosity!"

"And what influence could this era exert on art?"

"Virtuosity in the first place exerts an influence on composition in general, it presents a wider range of subjects, enlarges the horizon of expression, thus it influences composition; since the great composers were themselves virtuosos, i. e. had excellent technique on their

* Moscheles' 'Etudes Characteristiques' are probably works of the same epoch. Chopin also wrote etudes at this time, without especial designations, without program, but containing a world of psychological expression, for instance, the Etude E major, E flat minor, C sharp minor, B minor, C minor, and others. I separate the etudes of these two composers from the above mentioned, because they seem to me to be of a more serious nature, in a musical sense.

instruments, they influenced the style of composition of 'minorem gentium,' and thus both go hand in hand. Composition is influenced by virtuosity and virtuosity by composition. Besides, virtuosity influences the construction of instruments. When Beethoven, in the beginning of the adagio in his sonata Op. 110, demands twenty-eight repetitions of the same tone, then that is a request made by the virtuoso to the instrument-maker, to devise means for holding the tone on the piano."

"Why is criticism so prejudiced against virtuosos?"

"Only against those who regard virtuosity as the end, not the means. I must somewhat modify the severity of this view; I think 'Es muss auch solche Käuze geben;' for in the first place perfection, in whatever field it may assert itself, invariably commands respect, and secondly, because the influence of virtuosity on art, though indirect, is yet appreciable. Paganini's compositions are not of an especial artistic value, but he has breathed new life into the violin. The compositions of Servais for violincello have still less artistic value, but

Servais has breathed new life into the violincello. Thalberg's compositions for piano are not remarkable, but Thalberg has breathed new life into the piano. As the virtuosos of to-day do not dare to perform their own compositions, but have to execute those of others they cannot display their ability to the fullest extent, but must interpret the ideas of others, and hence the decline of virtuosity. For only in his own compositions can a performer permit himself to be audacious, and such audacity is beneficial. The repetition of accepted forms may be wise and noble, but not conducive to progress. Formerly the virtuosos incited the instrument-makers to great zeal in perfecting their instruments, by the great demands they made; nowadays the instrument-makers try by all kinds of inventions to induce the performers to improve their technique. We have many very good pianists at present, but in the sense of progressive art, Tausig is the last virtuoso. The same is true in violin music. There we might term Wieniawsky as the last virtuoso, in violincello music, Davidoff, and in song, Viardot-Garcia."

"On this point I agree with you. I find that the virtuosos of the present day are forced to renounce their individuality. A kind of musical conservatism has been created which is very uninteresting and finally becomes tedious."

"And now you will be startled at what I have to say next. I think that with the death of Schumann and Chopin, 'finis musicae.'"

"Ha, ha, ha, you cannot possibly be in earnest!"

"I am indeed in earnest. I believe this to be specially applicable to melody and thought in composition at present. Much is written that is interesting, perhaps even valuable, but nothing grand, sublime or soulful, especially not in instrumental music; and that, as you know, is my criterion."

"How will you demonstrate this?"

"By the preponderance of colorature at cost of the design, of technique at cost of idea, of the frame at cost of the picture."

"But I want a more explicit and more precise explanation."

"Three names become the banner-bearers of the new era (the fourth epoch in the art of mu-

sic), Berlioz, Wagner and Liszt. The most interesting of these, considering the time at which he appeared (about the year 1830) and because he did not gradually develop new ideas, but disclosed them at the beginning of his career, is Berlioz. He has found new effects in orchestral music, has not adhered much to accepted standards; he has placed the greatest stress on the matter of the text (declamation), on tone-painting (program-music); he has introduced realism in music (in his requiem the 'Tuba mirum' he endeavored to realize this by placing a great number of brass instruments in different parts of the church); he liked peculiarities of instrumentation (he wrote entire chords for eight pairs of drums, also chords for contrabassi divisi; he also gave flageolet sounds to the string instruments of the orchestra, and so forth) but specifically musical ideas, melodious invention, beauty of form, wealth of harmony (he was weakest in that respect) are not to be found in his works. Dazzling, brilliant, startling, interesting as is all his work it is at the same time studied, affected, neither beautiful nor great, neither deep nor sublime—and if

you play any of his compositions on the piano,* even four-handed (therefore with great volume) that is, if you deprive them of their instrumental coloring, and there remains—nothing. But if you play the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven on the piano, even two-handed (therefore without great volume) you will be overwhelmed with the power of thought and soulful expression. But I would make an exception in favor of the overture to the 'Carnival of Rome' which is an excellent piece of work even in regard to musical invention.—The second in importance is Wagner."

"Well, he interests me most."

"When I visited Mendelssohn one Sunday in 1845 or 1846, I met Taubert who, noticing the partiture of 'Tannhäuser' on the piano, inquired what he thought of that opera. Mendelssohn replied, 'A man who composes not only the music, but also the text of his operas is surely not an ordinary man.' That may well be, but it does not overthrow my theory about this modern com-

* In my estimation that is altogether the best way to test an orchestral composition or an opera or an oratorio, and other works of that nature—i. e., in regard to their intrinsic musical value. It is like a photograph of an oil painting.

poser. He is very interesting, very valuable, but not beautiful, great, deep, or sublime, in a specifically musical sense."

"Would you also deny that he possesses originality?"

"He is so many sided that it is difficult to pronounce a general criticism. Besides, his principles of art are so unsympathetic to me that my view of him may vex you."

"If I have had sufficient patience to listen to your discourse thus far, I will also be able to hear your opinion of him."

"He regards vocal music as the highest expression of art. For me, music, (with the exception of song and church-music) begins only where words cease. He speaks of *Gesammtkunst* (a combination of all arts in opera). I think that we cannot do justice to any one of them in that way. He advocates the legend (the supernatural), as the subject matter of an opera. In my estimation, the legend is always a cold expression of art. It may be a diverting or poetical spectacular play, but never a drama, for we cannot sympathize with supernatural beings. When a tyrant compels a father

to shoot an apple from his son's head, or when a wife saves her husband from death, by throwing herself between him and the end of his assailant's dagger, or when a son has to disgrace his mother in public by declaring her insane, only in order to save her life, and more subjects of that order, the plot arouses our deepest sympathy and compassion, be it spoken, sung, or acted in pantomine; but if a hero renders himself invisible by means of the 'Tarnkappe,' or passionate love is aroused by means of a love-potion, or when a knight appears drawn by a swan, which will afterward divulge itself as a prince, that may present a very poetical, pleasing, beautiful spectacle, but our heart, our soul remains completely cold and unresponsive. The leading motive of certain persons and situations is sometimes so naïvely conceived, that it verges on the comic instead of the pathetic. Allusion—an old device in music—is sometimes effective, but should not be misused, yet the repetition of the same strain of music at every appearance of a person, or whenever that person is mentioned by others, of the same motive in particular situations is

hyper-characteristic; I might almost say, a caricature. The exclusion of arias and ensembles in an opera, is in my opinion psychologically incorrect. The aria in opera is the same as the monologue in the drama. The emotions of a person before or after certain events, and the ensemble of emotions of a number of persons, how can their expression be dispensed with? A person who is always conversing with others, and never soliloquizing, (and thus talking to the public), becomes indifferent to us, because we never learn the inmost thoughts and feelings of that person. A love duet without the singing together at the moment of inspiration cannot be quite truthful, because the simultaneous rapturous outcry: 'I love you' is lacking. There is too much orchestral music in his operas, it lessens the interest in the vocal part; if the orchestra is to delineate the feelings and emotions of characters which these themselves do not communicate to the audience, the great importance which Wagner gives it is to be regretted; for it makes the singing on the stage almost superfluous; one often feels like requesting its silence in order to hear what is going

on on the stage. In 'Fidelio' we find the most interesting orchestra imaginable; but there one does not for a moment regret the importance accorded it.

"Making a change of scene 'invisible,' by ascending vapors is very exasperating to me. One cannot surmount impossibilities; and it is impossible to effect scenic transformation otherwise than by changing the scenery; under all circumstances, whether the scenes are lowered or hoisted, whether an entre-act curtain falls, or steam ascends, it is all the same; the illusion is destroyed; but any kind of interruption is preferable to a hissing symphony of steam! Darkening the body of a theatre during the performance, is more of a caprice, than a real æsthetic necessity. The increase of light on the stage and the actors, is not of such magnitude as to compensate the spectators for the longing they experience for lucifer matches. No one will thank him for this innovation but the theatre proprietors, as for them at least it means a saving of gas. The invisible orchestra which is of real effect only in the first scene of 'Rheingold,' is a hyper-ideal exaction, which is justi-

fiable for no other opera, not even for Wagner's. In the first place the muffled sound of the orchestra makes this innovation undesirable. Besides invisible music is only effective in church, where every one should look into his own heart and not at his surroundings. There are a few compositions, mainly by Beethoven and Chopin, which might gain in effectiveness, if heard in that style. But the 'Tannhâuser Overture,' for instance, would not be as effective if one could not see the movement of the arms in the violin-figure at the close. From an ideal stand-point, there are many irritating incidents which hamper the performance of a work of art, but one must accommodate one's self to that and not demand impossibilities. Therefore, the presence of the orchestra director and musicians is not so terrible, as to prevent one's enjoyment of the musical effect."

"You are discoursing at length about his art-principles, but what have you to say about his music?"

"The declaration of the infallibility of the pope has doubtless aroused in many people a disgust for the Catholic religion. If Wag-

ner had composed, published and produced his operas without speaking about them in his writings, then they would have been praised, criticised, loved or not, just as the works of every composer, but the fact that he declared himself infallible, aroused opposition and protest. He has indeed composed some works worthy of note ('Lohengrin,' 'Meistersinger,' and the overture to 'Faust' are my favorites among them)but his principling, calculation, and pretentiousness, spoil most of his work for me. The lack of naturalness, of simplicity, makes them unsympathetic to me. All the persons in his operas walk about on stilts (in a musical sense) always declaiming, never talking, always pathetic, never dramatic, always as gods or demi-gods, never as human beings, as simple mortals. Everything makes the impression of the Alexandrian hexameter, the cold, stiff form of alliteration. His melody is either lyric or pathetic—expressive of no other moods; although noble and broad, it is nothing but noble and broad; it lacks rhythmic charm and variety; diversity of musical characterization is therefore entirely absent. I cannot imagine him portraying either a Zerline or a Le-

onora; even in his 'Evchen' in the 'Meistersinger' the endearing diminutive *chen* can be heard only in the name, not in the singing. The personality is never illustrated by means of the melody, the musical interpretation, but only by the words (the *leit-motiv* shows only the external character, but not the soul of the person). Therefore his operas, if played on the piano and without a libretto, are incomprehensible, but 'Don Juan,' 'Fidelio,' or 'Freischutz,' if played on the piano without libretto, will always present a satisfactory image of the different personalities and even of the action of the opera. His orchestra-music, although new and imposing, is not unfrequently monotonous in its aims at effect and also often jars on the nerves, in the soft instrumental parts as well as in the energetic, powerful ones; it also lacks economy and variety in shading, because Wagner (like all composers of the present day) paints with all available colors (musically) from the beginning to the end of his work. So he is a very interesting appearance in music, but in comparison with the masters of the past and in a specifi-

cally musical sense I regard his work as very questionable art."

"Vox populi pronounces him a genius!"

"The public has so often been admonished for its inability of recognizing a genius during his life time, that it is now willing to pronounce every one a genius, only to escape the reproach of ignorance."

"But you ignore the fact that Wagner has breathed new life into the opera."

"As every art has its special conditions of existence, its special claims, its limits and so forth, so every branch of art. It may be very interesting to make of an opera, something else than an opera, but it really annuls the opera. It is something like the ambition of the piano manufacturer to make string, or wind-instrument 'attachments' to the piano in order to prolong or change the tone—a very superfluous undertaking. An adagio by Beethoven and a nocturne by Chopin are designed for the piano and its tone character; to transfer them to another instrument would be like painting a white marble statue. It is different with the adaptation of an orchestral composition for the

piano—that is musical photography. Wagner, therefore, creates a new department in art—music-drama; time will tell whether it is an acquisition, whether it possesses vitality."

"You have not succeeded in diminishing my admiration for him."

"Far be it from me, to attempt to force on you my opinion of any question we have discussed, I am merely giving expression to my ideas. The third of the '*ars militans*' is Liszt. Demon of music I should like to designate him! Scorching in power, intoxicating in fancy, enchanting in loveliness, carrying us aloft with him in his flights to the greatest heights, then again dragging us down to the lowest depths, adopting and using all forms, ideal and realistic at the same time, with knowledge of all and ability for all, but in all false, untruthful, impulsive, theatrical, and bearing within himself the evil principle. We mark two periods in his artistic career, the first is the virtuoso, the second the composer period. The first is, in my opinion, his most brilliant. Unrivaled and unequaled as a pianist, very interesting in his virtuoso compositions (comprising opera-fan-

tasias, etudes, song-transcriptions, Hungarian rhapsodies, shorter concert-pieces, etc.), he was the most brilliant star on the musical horizon from 1830 until 1852, and dazzled all Europe with his splendor. A contemporary of Thalberg's, one need only examine the fantasias both have written on motives from 'Don Juan,' to become aware of the immense difference between these two. Thalberg is the prim, starched, conventional, perfect salon gentleman, Liszt, the poetical, romantic, interesting, highly gifted, imposing individuality, with long, shaggy hair, a Dante profile, with magnetic personality. As for his piano playing—words are too poor to express its potency—inimitable in every respect, the culmination of all virtuosity. It is much to be regretted that the phonograph was not yet invented in the years 1840—1850, in order to receive and to perpetuate his playing for later generations, who have no conception of real virtuosity. One must have heard Chopin, Liszt, Thalberg and Henselt, in order to know what piano playing is! In addition to his greatness as virtuoso, Liszt also deserves unbounded credit for having, by words, written

and spoken, as well as by his playing brought to the cognizance of the public many unknown, forgotten or under-estimated composers. His career as a composer from 1853 is, according to my idea, a very disappointing one. In every one of his compositions 'one marks design and is displeased." We find program-music carried to the extreme, also continual posing—in his church-music before God, in his orchestral works before the public, in his transcriptions of songs before the composers,* in his Hungarian rhapsodies before the gypsies, in short, always and everywhere posing.

"'*Dans les arts il faut faire grand*' was his usual dictum, therefore the affectation in his work. His passion for creating something new (*à tout prix*) caused him to form entire compositions out of a simple theme. Sonatas, concertos, symphonic compositions, all embodying only one theme, an absolutely unmusical proceeding. A theme has a definite character, por-

*His best transcription is that of Schubert's "Erl-könig," most of his others, in consequence of the transposition of melody and method of phrasing into different registers, and of the frequent alterations and additions, are often unprofitable and unsatisfactory.

trays a mood; if variety of character and mood is imparted merely by change of tempo and rhythm, the entire composition will be found wanting in character and can at most be called a variation.* The forms of composition are not the caprice of one composer, but have developed with time and æsthetic requirements. Thus, the sonata form—to set this aside means to extemporize, but a fantasia is not a symphony, nor a sonata, nor a concerto. Architecture is an art nearly allied to music in its fundamental rules. Can one imagine a formless house, or church, or any other building? Or can you imagine a structure where the façade is a church, another part a railroad depot, another part a conservatory, and still another a manufactory, and so on? Hence lack of form in music is improvisation and verges on divagation. Symphonic poems (thus he terms his orchestral works) he claims are a new form of

*The fantasia, C major, by Schubert, is also founded on one theme, but it is a fantasia, therefore, logically unrestricted as to form, it contains four movements, each of which represents a definite mood and is completely worked out, therefore, not an episodic appearance of the motive. now in adagio tempo, and then in allegro, now in the character of a scherzo, and now in tragic character, and so on.

art; whether this form will prove to be an acquisition and possess vitality, time, as in the case of Wagner's music-dramas, must teach us. His orchestral instrumentation exhibits the same mastery as that of Berlioz and Wagner, but I must add that his pianoforte is an orchestra-pianoforte, not only in regard to power, but also in the variety of tone-coloring; and that his orchestra is the piano forte orchestra, for the orchestral composition sounds like an instrumented pianoforte composition. All in all, I see in Berlioz, Wagner and Liszt the virtuoso-composer, and I am willing to believe that their audacity may be of advantage to a coming genius. But in a specifically musical sense I can not pronounce either of them a composer; for in addition to all I have said concerning them, I have remarked that all three are lacking in the chief charm of creation, naiveté—that imprint of genius, and at the same time, that proof that genius is after all but a child of humanity. Their influence on the composers of the day is very great, but in my judgment not beneficial; it is not uninteresting to investigate which of them exerts the greatest influence

and in what country. In Germany it is Wagner, on the majority of the young opera composers, and Liszt on a few instrumental composers, in France and Russia only Berlioz and Liszt, on instrumental composers exclusively, as in France, Meyerbeer still holds sway, and in Russia opera is entirely in the reflexive national style. In Italy, Liszt has influenced young composers to cultivate instrumental composition, a branch which heretofore seemed uncongenial to the nature of the Italians; I think that this will finally remain so."

"For you then the period in art of to-day is merely a transition period?"

"At best. Whether it will develop, and into what, time will tell. I shall probably not live to see, and so I weep by the waters of Babylon and for me the harp is silent."

"If that is really so, then it must be because you have eaten of the tree of knowledge, and, therefore lose the paradise of delight."

"Only the pleasures of recollection are mine still."

"In your opinion, then, we can expect no more great and beautiful productions in music?"

"Who can venture to foretell the future? I speak merely and exclusively of the present day."

"But the living artists, such as Brahms, Dvorák, Grieg, Goldmark, Massenet, Saint-Saëns, Verdi, Gounod, Tschaikowsky and other composers; Joachim, Sarasate, Bülow, D'Albert, Stockhausen, Faure, Patti and others of the executive art?"

"'*De vivis nihil nisi bene!*' And besides most of those you mention are the children of a former epoch; I speak of the new recruits."

"Well, one who does not care for the music of to-day, can surely enjoy the music of the past; we surely have more frequent and better performances now than ever before."

"Surely more frequent, altogether too frequent, there is really too much music nowadays!"

"Then you are opposed to the popularization of art?"

"This question has two sides, each of which has its justification; but often as I have reflected on it, I could not decide which is the better. It is indeed desirable that the masses should hear the great master-works of music, hear them

and attain some comprehension of them; for that purpose we must found garden and popular concerts, etc., music-schools, choral societies, philharmonic societies, symphony concerts and so on, but, on the other hand, I feel that this divine art demands a sanctity, a cult in a temple to which only the initiated should have admission; it should remain the precious possession of the elect, and should have some mystery in itself and for the outer world—which of these two views is the correct one? For instance I should not like to hear the Ninth Symphony, or the last string-quartette, or the last pianoforte sonatas by Beethoven in a public garden or popular concert, and not at all for fear that they would not be understood, but for fear they might perhaps be understood!"

"You are really too fond of paradoxes."

"I am also not sure whether the art museums educate the mass of people in plastic art, or, whether they are not merely advancing the art-education of the cultivated class alone."

"I believe that the art of music has a different relation to the general elevation of people

than plastic art, and that it cannot be compared with it."

"We will not try to decide this question. But I seriously believe that the excessive performances and hearing of music makes it almost impossible for the composer of to-day to concentrate himself(one of the chief conditions for composing), for he is obliged to hear and perform so much of the music of others, not his own. After a laborious winter-season, and the ever increasing number of spring-tide music festivals (of the public I will say nothing and can only wonder at its enormous fondness for music!) he rushes away weary, often sick, to a summer-resort, but even here he must listen three times a day to a concert! And if these programs consisted of dances, Volkslieder, military marches, and the like—but no, it is again the 'Tannhâuser Overture,' the 'Feuerzauber,' Mozart, Weber, and so on."

"But the public is not composed solely of musicians, who should not and do not wish to hear music."

"For this reason one seldom returns from a summer resort really benefitted. But let us talk

seriously again. You have spoken of the best interpretation being accorded the master-works at the present time. I do not agree with you—the interpreters of to-day (directors and virtuosos) indulge in arbitrariness when performing classical works—for this Wagner and Liszt are most to blame—change of tempo, pauses, ritardandos, stringendos, crescendos, and so on, not written by the composer. Editions of piano-forte compositions with revisions of effect and expressions(?), (Henselt, Tausig), adding orchestra to pianoforte compositions, amalgamating two compositions into one (Liszt) changing the instrumentation of Chopin's pianoforte concertos (diverse) and even, *'horribile dictu,'* adding instruments to Beethoven's 'Ninth Symphony' (Wagner!) ignoring signs of repetition and many other innovations. In the last particular I have mentioned, it is really astonishing how professional musicians can allow themselves to indulge in such unmusical liberties! With Haydn, Mozart and especially Beethoven, the repetition-signs are by no means a caprice, but an integral part of the construction of the composition. Perhaps only in the adagio of the 'Jupiter Sym-

phony' of Mozart, in the repetition of the scherzo after the trio in Beethoven's 'Ninth Symphony,' are the repetition signs of questionable nature, (with Schubert, excepting the scherzos they also generally bear the accepted character) but for example, in the first part of the trio D major, in the last movement of the F minor sonata Op. 57, in the second movement of the trio B flat major, and above all in Beethoven's string-quartettes and symphonies, their omission, is really a '*crimen laesae majestatis!*' To this category of crimes belong also the omissions (so customary in Schubert's compositions); omissions are universal in operas, and directors and leaders claim that this is done for the best of the composer and composition. This appears to me like the theory of the Inquisition, which had people burned alive in order to save their souls."

"But you cannot deny that many an opera is improved by omissions?"

"Perhaps. But they ought to be made by the composer himself, and with his consent."

"There are several other questions pertaining to the art of music about which I should like

to ask your opinion; would you be willing to answer them?"

"I am willing to do so; not authoritatively of course, but to the best of my knowledge and perception."

"I hear so much of subjectivity and objectivity in performance. Which is the more correct?"

"I do not understand what people mean by the objective in performing. Every performance if it is rendered by a person and not by a machine, is *eo ipso* subjective. To do justice to the object (the composition) is for every performer, a duty, even a law; but of course, each in his own manner, and hence subjectively; and how is anything else conceivable? No two persons have the same character, the same nervous system, the same physical constitution; already the difference of touch of the pianist, the difference of tone of the violinist, or violincellist, the quality of voice in singers, the difference of character and disposition in the orchestra leader, necessitates subjectivity in performance. If the conception of a composition should be objective, there could be but one

correct one, and all performers would have to adhere to it. To what could such performers be compared?—to apes? Of course if a subjective interpretation changes an adagio to an allegro, or a scherzo to a funeral march,—then it becomes mere nonsense. But to perform an adagio in the given tempo, yet according to the player's feeling—this cannot be called doing injustice to the object. Should a musical performance be different in this respect from a dramatic one? Is there only *one* correct way to impersonate Hamlet, or King Lear? And is it necessary that every actor should ape one Hamlet, or one King Lear in order to do justice to the object? Ergo, I can sanction only subjective performance in music."

'What is your opinion about our young Russian school?"

"It is, in instrumental music, the fruit of Berlioz's and Liszt's influences, in piano compositions, that of Schumann's and Chopin's influences, and it has, in general, a reflective-national tendency. Its work is based on complete mastery of the technique, and on perfect colorature; but also on an entire absence of design

and the prevailing formlessness. Taking Glinka, who has written a few orchestra compositions on national songs and dances (*Kamarinskaja*, *Jota Aragonesa*, *Nuit a Madrid*), for their model, they also write for the most part folk-songs and national dances, and thereby exhibit their lack of ingenuity, cloaking it, however, with the names of 'National Art,' 'The New School,' etc. Whether from that direction anything may be expected for the future, I do not know; yet I would not entirely despair. For I believe that the peculiarity of melody, rhythm, and musical character of Russian national music, may be capable of producing a new harvest for music in general (I believe the same in regard to Oriental music); besides, some of the representatives of this new school possess superior musical talent."

"In this entire discourse you have not mentioned any feminine names, except in regard to song; was that due to forgetfulness or was it intentional?"

"The marked increase of women in the art of music, as well in the field of instrumental performance as in that of composition (I ex-

clude vocal music in which they have always excelled), dates from the second half of our century, and I consider this excess also as one of the signs of the decline of the art. Women are lacking in two principal qualifications for performing and composing,—subjectivity and initiative. In performing they cannot rise above objectivity (imitation); they have neither the courage nor conviction for the subjectivity. For musical creations they have not the depth, the concentration, the reasoning power, the scope of the emotional horizon, the freedom of execution, etc. It is enigmatical to me that music, the noblest, finest, most sublime, most soulful, most intense of all arts which the human mind has created, is unattainable to woman who is really a combination of all these qualities.* And yet she has accomplished so much in other arts, and in the sciences! The two sentiments nearest her heart—affection for the beloved one, and tenderness for her children, have not been echoed by her in music. I know neither a love duet, nor a cradle song composed

*It is the same in architecture, which proves again the near relation between these two arts.

by a woman. I do not mean to imply that none exist; but that none has sufficient artistic value to stamp it as a type of the kind."

"That is not flattering for our sex. Yet if it is really so, we must console ourselves with the hope that since women have devoted themselves to music for so short a time quantitatively, they will also be able in the course of time to show their ability qualitatively. Perhaps the future Beethoven and the future Liszt will be of the feminine gender!"

"I do not expect to live to see that day, and so I will not rob you of that hope."

"And now I should like to hear your opinion about conservatories and music schools. Their work is condemned by many, and others disapprove of their very existence."

"There you touch a tender point, as I have myself founded music schools. It cannot be denied that our great masters did not receive their instruction in conservatories. But this does not prove that the latter are unnecessary, or that they have not great advantages for art. The principal aim of these institutions is, as it has always been, to increase the number of

well schooled musicians. The great promulgation of the art of music makes the conservatory necessary, even indispensable. When we consider what a large army of votaries (choirs, orchestras, soloists, directors, music-teachers etc.) music must have at the present day, we must admit that private instruction could not meet the requirements. Besides, the music-school has advantages that should not be under-rated. The musical atmosphere alone is inspiring to its disciples. Then the stimulus which class and general instruction is sure to arouse, is beneficial, and acts as an incentive. That conservatories do not always fulfil their mission can be attributed to two causes; first, the want of sufficient money, if it is not a state institution, and second, that the course of instruction is so arranged as to give the students technical efficiency, and not the ideal and at the same time practical education. If the college is a government institution, it does not suffer from the first evil, but in that case, we often find the system of protection and philanthropic stand-points, with false ideas of art, disregard of the earnest significance and

ideal requirements, interfering so largely with the usefulness of the school, that the institution may easily be turned into a music-factory, a music-barrack, or even a music-hospital. If the music-school be a private undertaking, the money question is apt to play such a weighty role, that one can scarcely speak of the interest or demands of art. The second consideration is indeed worthy of serious deliberation, especially in regard to the final examination. Usually, a pupil of a music-school is, during the alloted time, so well drilled in technique, that he almost always passes his final examination creditably and receives the desired diploma, but he is withal very rarely capable of independent effort and, therefore, calls forth the contempt of the public for the institution, in which he has received his musical education. I think that might be remedied in the following manner: the institute should give to the pupil, probably two months before his graduation, as a final test, the task of studying alone, that is without the aid of his teacher, a number of pieces of various composers, of different character, of different art epochs, (concertos, chamber-music

and solo) for the piano; for example from Scarlatti until and including Liszt; of course, in recommending such a measure one would have to be sure that one could rely on the most scrupulous honesty, both on the part of pupil and teacher. The same method might be adopted for students of vocal music, of string, brass and reed-instruments, altogether for every branch of executive musical art. If the pupil can pass such an examination with credit, then he, his teacher, and the conservatory may be content—the worth of the pupil is therewith certified, the pedagogical activity of the teacher is amply proved, and the usefulness of the school can no longer be questioned. All have fulfilled their duty to the utmost."

"I once happened to meet a pupil of a conservatory of good repute soon after his graduation. He played his test piece for me—the first solo(!) of Hummel's B minor concerto—and very well, too, but he could play neither the first *tutti* of it, nor even a few bars of the music succeeding his solo."

"I, too, have had strange experiences to that effect."

"When I hear piano playing, the thought always occurs to me how happy the former composers would have been, if they had known the piano of the present day."

"I believe that the instruments of by-gone times, possessed facilites for tone-coloring and effects superior to those afforded by the modern pianoforte; that the early compositions, were intended for the instrument then used, and that these can, therefore, only produce their complete effect on that instrument, thus, if played on the modern pianoforte they rather lose than gain in value. If Ph. E. Bach could write a book on expression in piano playing, then it must have been possible to produce tone-painting on the instruments of that time, although we cannot imagine how that could be realized on such as we know to-day, as clavecin, clavichord clavicembalo, spinet, and so forth, and he certainly speaks of an instrument which his father also must have known. Altogether, we can form no judgment of the instruments of those times, even from those exhibited in the museums of London, Paris, Brussels, and so forth, for time effectually eradicates tone-coloring in

a piano, and, besides that, the most important, the method of using these instruments is entirely unknown to us. It is strange how little the manufacturers (instrument-makers) know about this subject! In London I was present at a lecture on this topic, in which a professional stated that J. S. Bach composed his piano compositions, among others the 'Chromatic Fantasia,' for the spinet, but is this conceivable? The recitative therein sufficiently disproves that statement. But consider compositions like the prelude F major in the second part of the 'Wohltemperirte clavier' or the Sarabande G minor and D minor of the English suite! Should the holding of a tone for five to eight measures have been written merely for the eye? The spinet of that time must have been provided with attachments (which are now missing) which, like the present harmonica, afforded the possibility of holding tones. Neither do I believe what is so often told us to-day, that Mozart wrote for the spinet; even the instrumentation of his piano-concertos, as well as the five-octave compass of his piano compositions, contradict this theory. Possibly he had a spinet in his

work-room, but publicly he probably played on fine toned grand pianos. The short, abrupt, sharp tone of the spinet known to us could not do justice either to the brilliancy of the passage, nor the wonderfully charming melodiousness of his compositions, or it must be that the instrument had an entirely different sound one hundred years ago than it has to-day."

"According to your opinion then, the modern pianoforte is no improvement on the old style?"

"No improvement for performing works previous to Beethoven's time. At all events I would advocate for the performance of compositions of different epochs, a different method of rendition, respecting touch and use of pedal, on our modern piano. So for example I would play a composition of Haydn or Mozart on the modern pianoforte, especially in *forte* with the left pedal, because their *forte* has not the character of Beethoven's '*forte*,' especially not of the latest composers. Playing Hândel and particularly Bach, I would try by means of variety of touch, and change of pedal or register, to give them an organ-like character. Hum-

mel I would play with short, scholastic, clear touch, and very little pedal; Weber and Mendelssohn with very brilliant execution and pedal. Weber in his sonatas and concertstück with operatic, dramatic, and Mendelssohn in his 'Songs without words' with lyric character. Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, and of course, the later composers require all the resources imaginable of our modern pianoforte."

"I confess, that to me also Haydn's and Mozart's compositions sound too strong and too heavy, played on the piano of to-day."

"I even go to that length that I do not like to hear their string-quartettes played with a large tone and broad bowing, nor do I like to hear their symphonies by a large orchestra. In short, my desire in the interpretation would be variety in the tone-coloring for the different epochs of art."

"You speak of organ registration for the pianoforte, what do you mean by that?"

"Of course merely in the sense of suggestion, by means of change of pedal and powerful or light touch. In doing so I imagine the places

which demand the pedal played with the right pedal of the pianoforte, and that not in the sense of the theoretical requirements of the harmony, but in the sense of the weight of the organ pedal, that is, often without lifting the pedal in the change of harmony."

"Still that could only be applicable to organ compositions arranged for the piano, since no organ character is required in the compositions written by Bach for the piano."

"It seems to me that Bach thought of the organ in everything he wrote, with the exception of his dances, and, perhaps, the preludes (and even among these we note many which have an organ-like character); but, of course, what he has written for the pianoforte must be played on the pianoforte. But I cannot dismiss the idea that his piano must have had attachments which made it possible to vary the quality of tone, hence this constant desire for 'registering' whenever I play those compositions. I admit that this is a musical paradox of mine and *'peccavi'*."

"Is it really then utterly impossible to learn something definite in regard to the manner of interpretation of older compositions?"

"Unfortunately the composers before Haydn have left us entirely in the dark about their intentions regarding the execution of their compositions, they have indicated neither tempo nor shading (Ph. Em. Bach has even written only the upper voice and the bass in his pianoforte compositions), they have left it wholly to our conception and caprice, and have thus created a truly chaotic state of affairs."

"Has this not been ameliorated, however, in modern times, by classical editions edited by distinguished musicians?"

"On this subject I have already expressed my opinion several years ago, in a letter to the music publisher Bartholf Senff; the evil has rather increased than diminished. One can scarcely take up a composition by these masters, until and including Chopin, which is not edited by some renowned musician. If after the publication of the large editions of Bach, Hândel, Mozart, Beethoven, etc., the publisher would only publish the pieces singly, the public would indeed be grateful! Now, if one wishes to know how a fugue of the 'Wohltem-

perirte Clavier' appears in the original edition, he mnst look in the Library for Book X. of the Bach edition. The public derives no benefit from this, and must be content with the edition of some famous musician; of what problematic character these editions are we can amply prove by Czerny's edition of the 'Wohltemperirte Clavier.' "

"But exactly his edition has been regarded as a model one for many years?"

"Yet, in my opinion, it is so unsuccessful. I have never been able to reconcile myself either to the indications of tempo, nor to the shading of the preludes and fugues. A very few examples will be sufficient. Giving the fugue in C minor, Part I, a delicate staccato character, where immediately after (the fugue is one of the shorter ones) a close enters which would require a thirty-two foot organ, is indeed a questionable proceeding; giving the theme of the succeeding fugue in C sharp major a lively character by making the eighth staccato is also questionable, as the whole fugue betokens lyric import, hence legato character. The notation, two notes legato and two staccato in the theme of the fugue

in G minor, Part I., is really inconceivable, since by this means it gains a scherzo character, while it plainly (as indicated by its minor key) is of a melancholy, complaining, singing nature. Giving the prelude F minor in Part II., a slow tempo is also singular, for from the fifth measure a figure is used which in slow tempo would be very tedious—could the latter be imaginable in Bach?—and thus, many other things. In this I do not mean in any way to call into question or under-value the pedagogic importance of Czerny, as I myself consider him one of our best musicians in the pedagogical field. This edition, however, seems to me absolutely false. It is true, our beautiful divine art has the misfortune, that it cannot make two musicians feel alike regarding it. And how differently musicians feel is amply proved in the prelude in C major, Part I., of the same 'Wohltemperirte clavier.' To me it is the real modulatory pianoforte prelude, a chain of broken chords (arpeggio) to be played in quick tempo with brilliant touch; many others regard it as a dreamy piece, to be rendered with soft shading. Since Gounod used it as a foundation for his 'Ave Maria,'

many believe that without this melody it has also a religious character, etc."

"That is indeed a sad state of affairs for the classic compositions."

"Oh, very, very sad, unless an academic edition of the works be published soon, in which tempo, marks of expression, character of the composition, art of embellishment, etc., are academically decided."

"To the best of my knowledge Ph. Em. Bach has written a treatise on embellishments."

"Yes, he has; but in the first place, he had in view the manner of rendering the embellishments for the instruments of that time; whether that would be applicable nowadays to our instruments of the same character is doubtful; in the second place the composers of that time did not write their embellishments in the same manner, and Ph. Em. Bach wrote his treatise simply for the embellishments in his father's works; in the third place, no two musicians to-day are of the same opinion in regard to the rendering of embellishments."

"Under such circumstances there is indeed

great need of an academic edition of composers until and including Beethoven."

"If musicians could only agree on any one question in music."

"I have been told that you do not approve of the programs of the symphony concerts."

"I confess that the '*tutti frutti*' character which is customary in the arrangement of such programs is very disagreeable to me. To listen to a symphony by Haydn and immediately afterward to the 'Tannhâuser Overture,' by Wagner, or *vice versa*, is disgusting to me; and that not on account of my preference for one composer or another, or one work or another, but on account of the glaring difference in tone-color. I would prefer a whole program (overture, aria, concerto, song, solo) by one and the same composer."

"But is there a composer, with perhaps, the exception of Beethoven, who would dare to put the patience of the public to such a test? I do not refer to operas, in which the plot and scenic-effects might relieve the occasional tedium of the music, or of sacred or profane ora-

torios and cantatas where the text contributes to the interest."

"We attend a lecture on a certain theme, and, whether we agree with the lecturer or not, we give him our attention. We also visit the atelier of a painter or sculptor, and even though we may not be pleased with all the objects therein, yet we look at them. It ought to be the same in the case of a composer. Yet, if the listening to the different works of *one* composer should not be practicable I would at least advocate the division into epochs—the epoch from Palestrina to Schumann and Chopin inclusive, and the epoch from Berlioz to the composers of the day* inclusive, and in this manner in each series of subscription concerts a concert of the first and a concert of the second epoch."

"I believe you are also opposed to the customary placing of the orchestra?"

"The placing of the orchestra is still an unsolved question. The symphony requires one

*I include the composers Raff, Gade, Brahms, Bruch, Goldmark, etc, as belonging to the first epoch, first on account of the character of their work, second on account of their musical training.

placing, the oratorio another, the opera another. It has always seemed to me that in the symphony concerts, in placing the first violins to the left and the second violins to the right of the director, the audience on the left hears too little and the audience on the right too much of the second voice. I have attempted (always to the dissatisfaction of the orchestra) to place the string quartette *in plenum* on both sides of the director; that is, the second violins following the first ascending the estrade, then the violas, then celli, then contrabassi on the left of the estrade, and in the same manner again the first and second violas, etc., on the right side if the estrade; the wind instruments from the flutes and oboes to the trombones, in the centre, ascending the estrade from the director, and above these also the timpani and other percussion instruments. I was told that the sound was much more satisfactory and beautiful to the audience, but it is difficult to overcome old prejudices, so I had to abandon this method of placing it. In chorus too, I think it best to place all four chorus voices on each side of the estrade; in double choruses it seemed to me a matter of

course, but in this, too, I encountered dissatisfaction and opposition. I also object to the position of the director of the orchestra in an operatic performance. To do justice to his task, he ought to be able to make himself felt on the stage, and at the same time in the orchestra; sometimes a glance or a wave of the hand would be sufficient to assist a singer, either in tempo or musical expression, if he had accidentally lost his way; and how is that possible if the director has his stand not at the footlights of the stage, as formerly, but at the edge of the orchestra, as now? There he can only direct members of the orchestra, the actors on the stage are left to their own devices. Of course, in view of the demands made on the singer of to-day (good memorizing, correct intonation, and distinct declamation) where singing, phrasing, technique and many other things are scarcely given a thought, the director is not of importance or use for the stage!"

"What do you think of musical prodigies?"

"Most of our music-heroes were prodigies, but their number is, nevertheless, very insignificant in comparison with the enormous number of

children who, nowadays, attract public attention, really exhibit musical talent, and who afterward sink into oblivion, or into insignificance. Usually these children display astonishing musical gifts at a very early age, but afterward there comes a time (with boys from their fifteenth until their twentieth year, with girls from their fourteenth until their seventeenth year) when their musical ability seems paralyzed or entirely dormant, and only those who are able to pass this Rubicon become real artists. The number of these, however, is only a small one."

"Yet another question, which greatly interests me, and about which I am quite in the dark,—what is meant by church style in music?"

"I will tell you that immediately, my dear friend, I do not know that myself! However, about what do you wish information, about prayer set to music, or about compositions with sacred subjects or sacred text?"

"Well, both."

"It is not possible in my opinion to have one church style for all Christianity. The southerner experiences different emotions in prayer

from the northerner, the Catholic from the Protestant, the Protestant again from the adherent of orthodoxy, etc. To me the singing of a hymn in unison by the congregation, accompanied by the organ, as harmonic base, as is done in the Protestant church service, is most sympathetic in a musical sense. Part singing is already more of an artistic performance, hence ceases to be individual prayer. But I can understand that the Catholic, for the splendor of his service, requires organ, chorus, solo, orchestra, etc.* In the church compositions of our great masters, it would be difficult to discover a standard or prescribed church style. Take for instance, the 'Missa Papae Marcelli' by Palestrina, the 'Messe' in B minor by Bach, and the 'Missa Solemnis' by Beethoven, which of the three is really in prescribed church style? or, instead of the Mass of Palestrina (since it is a capella, while the other two are with orchestra accompaniment) the requiem by Mozart, do we find in these an established, sanctioned, prescribed church style? All these compositions

* The Greek-orthodox service allows of no instrument and is in musical expression merely of a choral, (a capella) nature.

are serious in character, with sacred text and of extraordinary beauty, and that is all. Or should the fugue and the polyphonic treatment of voices alone mark church style in music? Or should church-style absolutely require the usual A——men, Hale——lujah, Hosa——na, with several measures of figuration on the vowel? The reason that in Protestant countries church-music is of a more serious character than it is in Catholic countries, is that in Latin countries the opera has influenced church-music (there again the evil influence of the vocal virtuoso on the composer is illustrated), which it could not do in Protestant countries, since there, even to-day, the devout Protestants regard the theatre with abhorrence. I consider it an error, however, for Protestant countries to condemn the 'Stabat Mater' of Rossini or the 'Messe' of Verdi. The Protestant may indeed say 'My religious sentiments are different,' but not 'that is bad, because it is different from my religious sentiments!'"

"But the operatic and homophonic in these compositions is to be condemned from a purely artistic standpoint, is it not?"

"Heaven is different in Palermo than at Insterburg, and that explains very much. As for example: A beautiful maiden of Palermo throws herself on her knees at a street corner, before an image of the Virgin and prays, 'Holy virgin! help me to win Beppo for my husband; if thou dost I will offer thee my coral necklace, if thou wilt not, then—' Such a prayer, under such a sky, or at such a shrine, I cannot imagine set to music otherwise than with a melody in allegro tempo in six-eight measure; but when a beautiful maiden of Insterburg pours out her heart to God, her humility, her earnestness, and her contrition require in musical expression a melody in adagio tempo in four-four, perhaps in three-two time."

"Paradoxes again!"

"That may be, yet they contain truth."

"But we were speaking of a given Latin text, a mass, composed by musicians of different creeds."

"Yes, and we must not ignore the difference in their religious feelings, conditioned by the clime, the education, the historical and ethical standard of culture of their time, the traditions,

etc. It is with that as with the art of painting. A picture by Holbein, or by Albrecht Dürer has a different character, than the same subject painted by Leonardo di Vinci or Raphael or any other Italian, and so, too, another character than the same painted by Rubens, Rembrandt, etc."

"You have spoken of the echo and vibration of historical events, of social and ethical standards of the age, etc., in music; what connection could be traced between music and the world-stirring events of our century?"

"You apparently wish to carry the question to the extreme; then it might easily become grotesque, and still I must maintain my statement. Yes, to me music is the echo and vibration of all these, and even though you may again term me paradoxical, I can follow musically even the events of our century.

"Our century begins either with the year 1789, the French Revolution, (musically with Beethoven) or the year 1815 is to be considered as the close of the eighteenth century: Disappearance of Napoleon from the political horizon, the Restoration, etc., (musically, the scholastic-virtuoso period, Hummel, Moscheles and

others) flourishing of modern philosophy (third period of Beethoven.) The July revolution of 1830, Fall of the Legitimists, raising of the son of Philip Egalité to the throne, the Orleans dynasty, democratic and constitutional principle to the fore-ground, monarchical principle in the back-ground, 1848 in sight (Berlioz) the Aeolian harp of the Polish rebellion of 1831 (Chopin). Romanticism and its victory over the pseudo-classic (Schumann), the flourishing of all arts and sciences (Mendelssohn), the triumph of the bourgeoisie, in the sense of material prosperity, a shield against all disturbing elements of politics and culture (Kapellmeister music); Louis Napoleon becomes emperor (Liszt, the virtuoso, becomes composer of symphonies and oratorios) his reign, (the operetta becomes a branch of art) the German-Franco war, Germany's unity, the freedom of Europe resting on ten millions of soldiers; change in all formerly accepted political principle (Wagner, his music-drama, his art principles); the present condition of Europe, expecting and seeking to avoid a frightful collision, uncertainty, universal feelings of instability in the politics of the

day (condition of music, foreboding, possibility of the downfall in the art of music, transition period, longing for a genius); division and conflict of the ever-increasing political, religious social factions, (representatives and defenders of all musical schools, classic, romantic, modern, nihilist) striving of diverse nations and races for autonomy, or federation, or political independence (more and more striving for reflective nationalism in music,) and so on."

"I cannot possibly follow you in such a paradoxical flight."

"But you must admit that in all this a certain affinity may be discerned."

"From all you have told me I must arrive at the conclusion that you cannot feel happy in your profession at present, and I commiserate you deeply. What you revere, has been; what is, you do not revere, thus you are in complete opposition to the reigning taste, to art-criticism, the cultivation of music, both executive and creative, to musical education, the modern views of art, the present art principles, in fact, to everything pertaining to music. Therefore, it is easy to comprehend that you with your criticisms,

as your adored virtuosos in their technique, 'break all limitations.'"

"I feel that I shall not live to see the coming Bach, or Beethoven, and that thought distresses me. My only consolation is that I can still be enthusiastic for a prelude or a fugue by the Bach of the past, for a sonata, a string-quartette by the Beethoven of the past; for a song or an impromptu, or 'Moment Musical' by the Schubert of the past;for a prelude, or nocturne or polonaise, or mazurka, by the Chopin of the past; for a national opera by the Glinka of the past—to-day as ever."

"As for me, I recognize a steady advancement in the works of the present—and if this is as you maintain, only a period of transition, it interests me much more than the past. I firmly cherish the hope that I will live to enjoy the future Bach or Beethoven, and to rejoice in his new art."

"Oh! happy being!"

After I had accompanied Madame von——— to her carriage, I returned to my studio and remained standing there, meditating whether it might not be the *musical Götterdämmerung* which is now drawing near.

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